

NORTH COUNTRY NOTES

ISSUED MONTHLY EXCEPT SUMMER BY THE

CLINTON COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

No. 70

Allan S. Everest and Charles W. McLellan, Editors

December, 1970

The December Meeting

of the Association will be held at 8 o'clock Monday evening, December 7th in the Auditorium of the Plattsburgh Public Library. The speaker of the evening will be the Senior Historian in the Office of State History in Albany, Mr. Edmund J. Winslow, whose subject will be "19th Century Iron Production in the North Country."

Mr. Winslow holds Master of Arts degrees in history from Colgate University and Siena College. Before assuming his present position, which is next to the State Historian in importance, Mr. Winslow taught social studies in the public schools and served in the Department of Public Welfare of Albany County.

Genealogical Queries

The Association has received queries regarding the families listed below. If any of our members have any information likely to bear on these people, the senders, whose addresses appear below, would be grateful to hear from you. This seems an appropriate service our society can offer those from afar who are interested in this area.

ROCK (laRoque), ?Mose of 1870's, Scarla Falls, N. Y. had son Napoleon who m. Mary SORELL, dau. of ?Joseph and - (COUNT(E)) Sorell of Morrisonville. Also the LA VIGNE family of Chazy of the same period to the present.

Mrs. Frances V. Foley, 5416 Howland St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19124

Henry Anderson MINER, son of Anderson Miner of Norwich, Vt., was a locksmith in Champlain; he married Isabel ADAMS and had dau. Mary Jane Miner b. 1857 Champlain.

Mrs. Richard Erratt, 412 Wilson Dr., Midland, Mich. 48640

Andrew H. SHERWOOD b. 1808, Plattsburgh, of Samuel and Orinda (CONVERSE) Sherwood; Orinda was from Vt. Andrew mvd. Madison Co., Ohio, 1822.

Mrs. John C. Starr, 9 Park Ave., London, Ohio 43140

Oliver HICKOK served in the War of 1812 and m. Chloe -. He had brothers: Heman, Ira, Daniel, Stephen, James and sisters: Rachel LOOMIS, Rhoda SIMS, and Lucinda STILES. This family lived at Shoreham, Pittsford, and North Hero, Vt. but had relatives in Chazy and other New York towns.

Mrs. Charles Harmon, 1009 Third Ave., Mendota, Ill. 61342

POLLUTION, OLD STYLE

During the Adirondack lumber boom of the 19th century, sawmills lined the rivers flowing into Lake Champlain. As late as 1888, some 200,000,000 feet of timber were taken out of the Adirondacks. Until the coming of the Chateaugay Railroad, much of it was floated down the rivers as logs. Sawmills along the Saranac River were to be found in every town, especially at Cadyville.

The sawdust was dumped into the River and found its way into Plattsburgh Bay. There it piled up along the shores and once formed a new reef on which the steamer Vermont grounded. The only difference between this and later kinds of pollution is that the lake is rapidly reaching a saturation point, and that today's generation will no longer tolerate the use of the lake as a dumping ground.

Treatment of Soldiers at the Barracks after the Spanish War

(This is a hitherto unpublished account by Dr. D. S. Kellogg of his temporary service at the Plattsburgh Barracks in 1898. His complete manuscripts are to be found in the North Country Historical Research Center at the College, where they have recently been deposited by his descendants.)

From September 25 to November 11, 1898, I attended sick call at the Barracks. The regiment, the 21st U. S. Infantry, consisted of about 1,200 men. Of these about 700 were recruits recently come from camp at Lithia Springs, Georgia. The remainder were mostly men who had been in Cuba but had come from there via Montauk and various hospitals in Philadelphia, New York, New Haven, Providence, Boston and other eastern cities.

My duties required me to attend sick call only. You know that each man who thinks himself sick goes to his First Sergeant and has his name put on the sick book. He then at sick call goes to see the doctor who attends sick call. This doctor either prescribes for him at once and marks him "quarters", or sends him to the hospital or to duty if he is found to be well, or when he has recovered sufficiently to do duty, sends him to duty or light duty, according to his condition.

During these 7 weeks an average of about 140 men came to me daily. Once in a while the number was less than 100, and some of the time it was more than 170. Besides these who saw me there were from 80 to 100 in the hospitals, and also besides these I think from 2 to 3 hundred during that time were convalescing from various volunteer regiments and other regulars than the 21st, e.g. there were cavalrymen, artillerymen, colored infantry, Rough Riders, etc. etc.

Those whom I prescribed for were given medicine and directions for 24 hours and the next morning they had to report again. The steward had the names of the men arranged according to companies and their treatment of the previous day, if they were already on sick report. Two druggists were behind their desk and dealt out the medicine prescribed to each man, and also repeated to him carefully the directions given by the doctor. In this way I many a morning finished my work in 100 minutes, on the average perhaps each man requiring $\frac{2}{3}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a minute. This was rapid and wholesale prescribing, yet I think the men were often benefited by it; and often the benefit was not very apparent.

Among the recruits the prevailing diseases were colds, rheumatism and beginning or convalescing from fevers such as typhoid and remittent. There were also some beginning pneumonia and some cases of acute venereal diseases.

The men who came from Cuba, most of them, were sick. They had had intermittent or typhoid fevers, or both. Also diarrheas, dysentery, pseudo-rheumatisms; excepting insect bites, very little skin disease; no acute venereal disease, wounds. But they were a sight to see. Pale, yellow, sallow, emaciated, gaunt-eyed, intensely anemic, listless, nervous, with such coated tongues as are indescribable. Often a man who was well during the whole campaign became ill after reaching Plattsburgh. The banner company for a long time had from 30-35 on sick report, most of them men who, one would think, never could recover but who in reality have nearly all, apparently to a man, recovered.

The fever men all of them had enlarged spleens, generally sensitive feeling, like a small loaf of bread behind the abdominal walls. These spleens often were painful and were much increased in size about the time of the recurrence of the chills. In one case so sensitive was the spleen and so enlarged, it seemed almost certain an abscess was forming. He was sent into hospital and under the care of Dr. Bentley recovered.

All of these fever men complained of great weakness and pain in the legs and also in the abdomen and lower part of the chest. It was not an unusual thing for the abdomen to be so distended as to make it necessary for them to have the waistbands of their pantaloons and drawers loosened. This distention was in the bowels, stomach and liver, as well as in the spleen. The chills frequently recurred with regularity, and frequently not. Still, in many cases it was possible to predict the time of the oncoming chill and in a measure forestall it. One common symptom was a pseudo-rheumatism, the joints being painful, also the muscles, and there was sometimes swelling. One sergeant had a kind of writer's cramp, his right thumb and index and middle fingers being numb and to some extent powerless.

There were also a few cases of deep-seated phlebitis of the lower extremities,

the leg and thigh being swelled and brawny and not edematous. I think these cases followed the typhoids rather than the malarials. There was one case of double vision in which I could not at first detect any lack of coordination of the muscles of the eyeballs, but which later was very apparent. The examination of urine in this case, as well as in the phlebitis cases, generally yielded negative results. There were cases of edema of the lower extremities in the urine of whom was some albumen, but these were rare.

Generally the chills gave some premonition for an hour or so before coming on, but in their course they varied greatly. Many had violent vomiting, others none at all. Some were delirious, others not. Often a man would be taken while waiting at sick call and have to be carried or helped into hospital. Sometimes a man, attended to at sick call, would be taken worse at his quarters and have to be carried to hospital before the whole of the sick call was completed.

Sometimes men who came to sick call were so very ill I feared they would not live 24 hours. In the longer intervals, say of 10 days or 2 weeks, the men would recover so much as often to do duty. Many and many a man I marked for duty at his own request, knowing him to be unfit for duty but cautioning him again and again to fall out if he found himself feeling sick, and many a time did they have to fall out.

My treatment in the main was as follows: those with the awful tongues above described, I gave the dilute mineral acids, viz. nitro-muriatic or hydrochloric. Afterwards I gave them iron for the great anemia. For the vomiting ones I gave nux vomica. For the chills themselves I had to give quinine. I can't say that it met my expectations. I am confident that many a chill can be better aborted or lessened by a full dose of morphine, taken an hour before the chill comes on. I also used Fowler's solution. In the pseudo-rheumatic cases I used the soda salicylates, elixir Philadelphiae.

North Country, 1887

The optimism of Plattsburgh's citizens was only temporarily set back during 1887 by the serious floods in the spring, the refusal of the state legislature to build the new insane asylum there, and two explosions in the dynamite factory following one in the previous year. The company moved away from Plattsburgh, to the relief of its residents.

Otherwise, the village obtained macadam on some of its streets, and also its first stock exchange. The railroad was extended to Saranac Lake, and the Delaware and Hudson began to replace the stoves in its passenger cars with hot water pipes heated by the locomotive. When Barnum's circus came to town, special trains ran from all directions. Henry George received a more subdued welcome. In the fall, Robert Louis Stevenson came to spend the winter at nearby Saranac Lake.

North Country, 1888

Spring came to Plattsburgh with the organ-grinders, while summer brought a troop of gypsies to their camp at the head of Cornelia Street. Nicely spaced were the great community events of the year: the enthusiastic celebrations of Decoration Day and the Fourth of July, and large turnouts for a series of temperance lectures and Forepaugh's circus. In the fall the citizens were swept up in the close presidential campaign between Cleveland and Harrison, in which much buying and selling of votes was practised.

Prosperity continued to favor the village. It expanded south of the river, while its citizens started the construction of a huge hotel and a home for the elderly. In February the Lake Champlain Transportation Company declared a dividend of fifteen percent. The Chateaugay railroad increased its business in iron ore and timber; about 200,000,000 feet of the latter were taken out of the Adirondacks, much of it coming through Plattsburgh. There was talk of electric railways, and a telegraphic connection with Burlington became a reality.

But the village also had some reverses. It was shocked by a starkly brutal murder. It endured a particularly severe winter. The state legislature refused to charter a much-desired Normal School in the village. And the minor plagues of counterfeit money and English sparrows received much publicity.

North Country, 1889

Plattsburgh obtained its first free mail delivery this year, and then undertook a partial renumbering of its streets. The old county courthouse and jail was torn down and replaced by a more capacious structure. The age of electricity began to affect the lives of ordinary people. Early in the year there were 110 telephone subscribers in the village, and some 700 incandescent lights were in use.

With traditional enthusiasm the citizens of the area collected \$2,100 for the sufferers from the Johnstown flood. They celebrated a five-day music festival and a four-day state firemen's convention. Great numbers welcomed Barnum's circus back to town, while 12,000 people witnessed a wedding at the county fair.

But less edifying matters also fretted the citizenry. Juvenile crime seemed to be on the increase, as did the activities of gangs of hoodlums. Ugly murder and the suicide of a prominent resident shook the town. Three brothels were closed down and their operators either arrested or deported. A new state law prohibited the sale of cigarettes to minors.

Several other actions of the state legislature had repercussions in the North Country. The most important was the decision to build a Normal School in Plattsburgh. Better public schools were in the offing, for Clinton County still had nearly half (23) of all the log schoolhouses in the state. The school year was increased from 28 to 32 weeks. Of direct concern to a county containing Clinton Prison at Dannemora was the state's precipitate decision that all executions must henceforth be carried out by electricity. Hasty experiments were conducted on animals, and re-surveys of power supplies and equipment were made in anxious anticipation of the first electrocution.

RIDDLE OF THE MONTH

Old riddle: General Benjamin Mooers was buried in 1838 minus an arm, which had been amputated the year before. It was preserved and buried with him. General Stephen Moffitt lost a leg at the battle of Fair Oaks in 1864, but survived to serve the North Country for many years.

New riddle: where are Button Brook and True Brook, and what do they have in common?

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Issued by the

CLINTON COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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