

NORTH COUNTRY NOTES

ISSUED OCCASIONALLY BY THE

CLINTON COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

No. 8

Allan S. Everest and Charles W. McLellan, Editors

Mar. 1962

The Next Meeting

will be held on Monday evening, Mar. 5, 1962, at 8:00 o'clock, in the Association Rooms over the Plattsburgh Public Library. MR. JOHN P. ROSS, historian of Rouses Point and author of numerous articles, will speak on "THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL RAILROAD", that line built north into Canada from Rouses Point. A major item of business will be consideration of amendments to the Association constitution of 1946, which have been submitted to members in the form of a re-written constitution. The public is cordially invited.

SPRING PROGRAMS

APRIL 2 - "*Plattsburgh: Sixty Years a City*" - Hon. Robert Feinberg

MAY 7 - "*Post Offices of Clinton County*" - Mr. Lawrence C. Kistner

JUNE 4 - *Annual Members' Exhibit Night*

ASSOCIATION DIRECTORY for 1962

By election at the January meeting, and by subsequent appointment by the President, the following will serve the Association during 1962:

Mr. Paul Benedict, *President*

Dr. Allan Everest, *Vice President, Chairman Program Committee*

Mr. David Fuller, *Secretary*

Mr. J. Bernard Stratton, *Treasurer, Chairman Finance Committee*

Mrs. John Laurinatis, *Curator*

Dr. Hans Hirsch, *Chairman Publications Committee*

Mrs. Charlotte McKeefe, *Chairman Membership Committee*

Miss Emily McMasters, *Chairman Museum Exhibits*

and Procurement Committee

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: In addition to the above-named officers and Committee chairmen: Mrs. Benjamin Allen, Mr. Wayne Byrne, Mr. Silas Clark, Mrs. Alice Hayden, Dr. L. Newton Hayes, Mr. William Howell, Jr., Miss Minnie Stoughton.

Fortifying the Canadian-United States Border

This letter from General John E. Wool to the Secretary of War regarding the necessity of building fortifications at Rouses Point and other border points is printed through the courtesy of Dr. Warder H. Cadbury, of The Adirondack Museum.

Inspector General's Office
19th November, 1830

Sir,

Conformably to your wishes, expressed when I met you at Buffalo, in July last, I have the honour to present my views on the expediency of fortifying the Northern Frontier, and particularly in the neighbourhood of Rouses Point on Lake Champlain.

Without going into an elaborate discussion of the subject, which I think you do not require, I would observe that national power is relative, and ought to be considered in relation to that of surrounding nations, or those from whom hostilities might be apprehended. This, it is obvious, would be necessary, if we would adopt precautionary measures for defence:- which, if practicable, should be in proportion to the means of those, with whom we might be involved, to carry on war. A great and powerful people, having weak and inefficient neighbours, would not be in danger of invasion; consequently, would not be under the necessity of erecting extensive frontier defences. But a small state with powerful neighbours, would be under obligations to exert all its means to erect barriers to protect it against invasion.

However much the United States may have to apprehend from the great powers of Europe, they have little at this time, and probably will not have for many years, to fear from their immediate neighbors. They are too feeble, should they have cause, to think of carrying on an offensive war against the United States, without foreign aid; and under such circumstances, they would hardly contemplate a successful invasion of the country by land. England with her mighty resources, has, under more favorable circumstances than probably will ever occur again, made two unsuccessful attempts to penetrate by way of Canada to the interior of New York. The first time, although at a moment when the United States were just emerging into existence, her army advanced no farther than the plains of Saratoga; and the second time only to Plattsburgh. If the United States, however, had been true to themselves when she made the last effort, and their armies properly organized, and directed by able and skillful commanders, the British armies would not at any time crossed the boundary line:- and our army, instead of halting at the 45th degree of North latitude, would have invaded Canada, taken Montreal and laid siege to Quebec: and if such had been the fortune of our arms I think we should not have erected at Rouses Point a monument to our folly.

A war of posts is not the modern mode of carrying on war. In Europe, where the frontiers of almost every state are extensively fortified, they are no longer considered obstacles to invasion or conquest. Intelligence, patriotism and valor, combined with science and discipline, are the best defences of every nation; without which however extensively fortified, a skillful and enterprising enemy could not be prevented from invading the country:- and as I trust and believe, in case of a future war with Great Britain or her colonies, the United States will be sufficiently powerful and patriotic, not only to defend her frontier, but to invade and conquer Canada. I would not expend one dollar for the erection of permanent fortifications on our Northern and Western Frontier. A nation with a population of more than twelve millions, and rapidly increasing, talk of frontier defences against a population of one million, at most not exceeding a million and a half. (I allude only to the population of Canada because I do not believe in case of another war, England would attempt a third time an invasion through Canada of the United States.) The idea is a reflection upon the valor and patriotism of our citizens. The only advantage that could be derived from

a fortification at or near Rouses Point would be to deprive the enemy of the means of transporting the munitions of war by water. If the army was sufficiently strong to invade the country it would not regard the fortress on the shore of the lake, and would advance by land. If it was not, and we had possession of the country, in a few hours a work could be thrown up that would be sufficient to check any movement by water. It is for the Canadians to erect fortresses on the frontier, and not the United States. In case of war they have everything to apprehend from us, and we have nothing to fear from them.

These remarks, however, I would not consider applicable to the sea coast, which must be viewed under very different circumstances. We are yet a commercial people, and as we depend on our foreign trade for a revenue to meet the expenses of the Government, this interest has the highest claims to protection. A navy, therefore, is indispensable to guard it on the ocean, and fortifications to defend it in our harbors and cities. It is on the sea coast, that we find the wealth and commerce, as well as the revenue of the country, concentrated;— and where we must expect to meet and contend with our enemies. Not that they would invade our shores under the expectation of conquest, but to destroy our commerce and lay waste our towns and cities. These, therefore, should be placed in a situation to be defended. But there I would stop. I would erect no fortifications beyond tide waters. If we do we must increase our army and consequently the expences of the Government. To this, perhaps, no objections would be made until the expences exceeded the revenue; and then the army would be reduced, the fortifications neglected, and finally would become a mass of ruins. With our magazines and arsenals well stored with munitions of war, a well conducted ordnance Department, a perfectly organized army, instructed in science and discipline, and, I repeat, a patriotic and chivalrous people, we shall be much better prepared for defence, than by wasting our public treasures on the erection of useless fortifications.

I have the honor to be, Sir, with the most respectful considerations,
your obt. servant

John E. Wool
Brig Genl U.S.A.

To the Hon. John H. Eaton
Secretary at War
Washington City

Desertion Notice

40 DOLLARS REWARD !

Deserted from the Cantonment at Plattsburgh, New York, on the night of the 3rd of April, 1817, the following named soldiers, of the 6th Regiment U. S. Infantry to wit,

Silas Lovell, aged 22 years, 5 feet 9 in. high, straight make, small head, round face, blue eyes, brown eyebrows, small nose, small mouth, small neck, brown hair, broad shoulders, straight legs and thighs, large feet, born in Pomfret, Vt., occupation a farmer; wore away a blue coat, white waistcoat and blue pantaloons.

*One of four desertion notices in an 1817
REPUBLICAN. (From Dr. Kreisman)*

Supervisors' Resolutions

1. That the sheriff be allowed \$2.25 per week for board washing and ordinary attendance of each prisoner in the jail.
2. That the present Superintendents of the County Poorhouse be, and they hereby are, removed.
3. That Edwin Benedict of Plattsburgh, Ira Rowson of Beekmantown, N. Harkness of Ausable, H. H. Horton of Chazy and Dwight Hitchcock of Champlain be, and hereby are appointed Superintendents of the County Poorhouse.

*Taken from the MINUTES OF THE
PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF
SUPERVISORS OF CLINTON COUNTY,
adopted on October 7, 1842.*

When President Van Buren Visited Plattsburgh

A partisan account of the visit of President Van Buren to Plattsburgh was made in the PLATTSBURGH WHIG, a paper hostile to his Democratic party. This extract is from the WHIG as disapprovingly quoted in the PLATTSBURGH REPUBLICAN issue of August 31, 1839. From Dr. Leonard Kreisman's talk at our last meeting.

A tall venerable man read a long paper to a small, insignificant, bald-headed, yellow-whiskered, heavy-browed looking personage, over whose HAIRLESS SCALP a kind friend held an umbrella, to ward off the "peltings of the pitiless storm" that had appeared to reserve its whole wrath to vent its fury upon this luckless assemblage, at this moment. . . . Four knights armed cap-a-pie, rode majestically up to our square on loaming steeds—then followed a band of music—next men at arms—then a file of nobly mounted militia officers, bedecked with plumes, lace and tinsel—upon their heels, four superb grays, drawing a chariot containing five or six choice spirits—this was followed by a POPERY, "Gentle and Simple," "Tag-Rag and Bob Tail," brought up the rear. The procession halted in front of our temple of JUSTICE in front of which had been erected an ELECTION HUSTINGS which was immediately taken possession of by those of the chariot.

1891 Plattsburgh Locals from "The Morning Telegram"

An excellent opportunity to visit New York is afforded Wednesday by the D & H and Citizens' Line steamers. Fare for the round trip only \$5.00.

It is said that one of our Republican friends will pay a bet this evening by giving his Democratic opponent a wheelbarrow ride from the Witherill to the Cumberland. Gilmore & Studholme will sell 150 pairs of pants for 75 cents a pair.

8 March '62

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Allan S. Everest, Co-editor

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