

# NORTH COUNTRY NOTES

ISSUED OCCASIONALLY BY THE

CLINTON COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

No. 1

Allan S. Everest and Charles W. McLellan, Editors

Nov. 1960

## *The Next Meeting*

will be held on Monday evening, Nov. 7, 1960, at 8:00 o'clock, in the Association Rooms over the Plattsburgh Public Library. The speaker will be MRS. DORIS BEGOR MORTON, teacher in the Whitehall Public Schools. She has spent several years of research on the life of Philip Skene, founder of Whitehall (then Skenesborough), and is the author of *Philip Skene of Skenesborough*. Her topic will be "PHILIP SKENE IN THE CHAMPLAIN VALLEY." The public is cordially invited.

## *Election Bets*

A hundred years ago the back pages of hotel registers were often used for idle scribbblings, various memoranda, and registering of bets. Among these last are the following, inscribed in the 1862-65 Register of the "Champlain House":

Mr. S. L. Fisher (of Pittsburgh) bets James Averill that the Lincoln party will carry the State of Pennsylvania by 15,000 majority over and above the McClellan party at the Presidential Election in Nov. 1864. Money deposited in B. P. Douglass' hands. Oct. 14th, 1864.

Nov. 7, 1864. After reflecting on the above I have concluded that although I can win the money still I do not desire to have Mr. Fisher lose his—that I do not wish to lose my vote. I have therefore directed Mr. Douglass to return his money to Mr. Fisher and have withdrawn my own, or rather withdrawn from Mr. Douglass any right to look to me for the amount, which he said

he was willing to do. In other words I back out in order to save my vote which I consider I have no right to throw away. *James Averill.*

Chas. E. Everest bets B. Booth that A. Lincoln will be President of 38 states before 4th of March, 1869—unless Grant runs against him. April 10th, 1864.

## EDITORIAL NOTE

*This first issue of North Country Notes is frankly experimental. It is planned to be published four or five times annually. However, its continuance is dependent entirely on your interest. Such interest can be shown by contributing material for these pages. Early family journals, letters, scrap books and diaries are rich in items of regional interest, as well as family anecdotes and traditions. The shorter the better, for space is restricted.* THE EDITORS.

## *A Welcome to Clinton County in 1789*

In the historical collection of Hugh McLellan is found the following letter from Melancthon Lloyd Woolsey, one of the first permanent settlers of Plattsburgh in 1785, to Pliny Moore, who in 1788 established the first settlement in Champlain. Both men had served as officers during the Revolution, both came to Clinton County when it was virgin country, and both remained as leaders in their new homes to see them grow into thriving and prosperous communities. Woolsey died in 1819 and Pliny Moore in 1822.

Platts Burgh April 13th 1789

Dear Sir

Permit me to Welcome your arrival to this County; I hope Mrs Moor finds her situation agreeable but tho' it is not at present a pasture of flowers, it is a Country that promises a bountiful reward to the honest labours of Industry—and when it comes to be under as high a State of Cultivation it will doubtless be as beautiful as older and richer places, with the addition of this most pleasing reflection (some 15 or 20 years hence)—“Where now you see those Meadows gay as the new Creation trend large and wide, and all those fields of golden grain, stern Desolation Stalk'd, & *wilderness* was wrote on every foot of soil—these hands began the renovation & I can now rejoice in the completion of the work”—these, my friend, and such like observations will be the topic when we are visited by Some of those who now suppose we have buried ourselves alive—let them enjoy their opinions and their luxuries—we will our temperance, health, honesty and independence; for my own part I had rather eat my own brown bread in a frock & trowsers, than in a Purple Robe to cringe lye & flatter for a subsistance.

Mrs Woolsey joins me in respects to Mrs Moor, we both thank you for your polite invitation. I hope this Summer will afford me a day to spend with you, & your avocations allow you to spend a little time here with your lady.

With Esteem & Respect

Your Most Obedient Servant

Mel L<sup>d</sup> Woolsey

30

Pliny Moor Esq<sup>r</sup>

---

*The signature of Melancthon Lloyd Woolsey, reproduced from a letter dated in 1806. The flourish is an integral part of the signature and is as invariable. The numeral is his age, a custom that he adopted early in life.*

*Your friend & Obed Servant*  
*Mel L<sup>d</sup> Woolsey*  
4 48 4

# Rules of Plattsburgh's First Library

(Drawn from Hurd's *History of Clinton and Franklin Counties*)

ART. II. No person shall be entitled to a right in this library unless he is a resident of the counties of Clinton or Franklin, and shall have at the same time been a member of the Clinton Medical Society.

ART. III. Each proprietor in this library shall have the privilege of drawing from the same one book four times in each year, viz., on the third Tuesday in January, the first in May and October, and on the first day of the sitting of the Court of Oyer and Terminer for the County of Clinton, and as frequently on intermediate days as the librarian shall consent to. Whenever two or more proprietors are wishing for the same book, he who will bid the greatest sum for the use of the library shall have the book.

ART. IV. Every proprietor who shall neglect to return such book in due time will pay for the first offense 25 cents and 3 cents for each succeeding day that he shall continue his

neglect, to be by the librarian recovered with the cost of suit before any Justice of the Peace in the county of Clinton.

ART. V. Each proprietor shall pay at every annual meeting to the librarian the sum of one dollar; in case of neglect or refusal to pay this sum he shall forfeit his rights.

ART. VI. Every proprietor shall forfeit and pay to the society, to be recovered as in Art. 4, the following sums for each respective offense, viz.: for each grease [spot] in a book, 3 cents; for every leaf torn, 12 ½ cents; for every leaf turned down, 5 cents.

ART. VIII. The president and librarian shall be a committee of inspection to examine the books on their being returned.

Adopted, June 28, 1808.

Submitted by  
Frederick Chaplin, Sophomore  
College of Education

## Did You Know . . . ?

(From Tuttle's *Three Centuries in the Champlain Valley*)

Sept. 7, 1785. The first child was born in the new settlement. Her name was Ida Ostrander. The first boy, Platt Newcomb, was born on Nov. 1st.

February, 1793. Prince Edward, son of George III, passed through Chazy where he crossed Lake Champlain with 13 carryalls and sleighs on the ice to Grand Isle and then to Burlington.

June 6, 1816. It was uncomfortable out of doors without a heavy coat and the atmosphere at Plattsburgh was filled with particles of snow.

July 7, 1817. President Monroe arrived in Plattsburgh on the *Phoenix*. On the day he left, the 28th, a large picnic was held for him 13 miles on the road to Chateaugay; the funds saved up for a new fire engine defrayed the expenses.

March 18, 1825. On Arsenal lot, Broad Street, occurred the public execution of Peggy Facto, accused of killing her infant child. A

former employer, General Benjamin Mooers, always believed her innocent. Many people came on ice from Grand Isle for the spectacle but were forced to return home by boat.

June 30, 1873. Plattsburgh's town clock struck the hours for the first time.

Nov. 3, 1880. The first kindergarten in Plattsburgh was opened by Helena Augustin on the corner of Oak and Protection.

May 1, 1882. There were 25 subscribers to the Northern New York Telephone Co.

Dec. 13, 1884. Plattsburgh's electric fire alarm was introduced.

Dec. 31, 1885. The first electric lights shone in Plattsburgh streets, the company being organized with capital from abroad.

Feb. 1, 1889. Free postal delivery began in Plattsburgh.

Submitted by  
Anne Solenski, Sophomore  
College of Education

## Book Review

THE PROUDEST DAY. By Charles G. Muller. 334 pp. New York: The John Day Co. \$5.75.

This historical novel is an admirable and detailed account of Thomas Macdonough's two years on Lake Champlain, culminating in the "proudest day our country ever saw" at the battle of Plattsburgh in 1814. The author is a newspaper man who spent fifteen years acquainting himself with the events of the War of 1812. His imagination created a few minor incidents, most of the dialog, and three characters; all other persons and events are a part of the historical record. As history, this book is accurate and exciting. As fiction, there is little plot which unfolds slowly through dialog; its characters tend to be puppets. As interpretation, it presents Macdonough as the hero who does no wrong; gives the naval side of the army-navy controversy; and accepts the largely discredited notion that the British were aiming for New York City.

Residents of the Champlain Valley should welcome this interesting book. A.S.E.

## 1961 Centennial

The Jewish Congregation of Plattsburgh will celebrate its centennial in 1961. In order to bring its written history up to date, the Congregation will welcome the contribution of old records and other mementos of its past.

New members are welcome in the Association. The cost is but \$1.00 a year, which after November 1st will cover 1961 membership. New members will receive a copy of our pamphlet *British Objectives at the Battle of Plattsburgh* as long as the supply lasts. Memberships may be sent to the treasurer, J. B. Stratton at 6 Stratton Place, or to the vice-president, Allan S. Everest at 26 S. Catherine St., both Plattsburgh. Additional copies of these NORTH COUNTRY NOTES are available for prospective members.

---

---

## ☆ NORTH COUNTRY NOTES ☆

ISSUED BY THE

CLINTON COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

---

---

*Allan S. Everest, Co-editor*

*26 So. Catherine St., Plattsburgh, New York*