

# NORTH COUNTRY NOTES

ISSUED OCCASIONALLY BY THE

CLINTON COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

No. 12

Allan S. Everest and Charles W. McLellan, Editors

Feb. 1963

## *The Next Meeting*

will be held on Monday evening, Feb. 4, 1963, at 8:00 o'clock, in the Association Rooms over the Plattsburgh Public Library. The program will be a talk by Mr. Robert MacFarlane on "THE CLIMATE OF CLINTON COUNTY." Mr. MacFarlane is Professor of Science at the State University College and is also the official Federal Weather Observer for Clinton County. The public is cordially invited.

## *Temperance in Clinton County*

In March of 1883, Lodge 676 of the Independent Order of Good Templars was organized in Morrisonville. Its chief object was temperance, to which end members took the "obligation."

The Lodge at first thrived with weekly meetings, fifteen "Worthy" officers, ritual, passwords, signs and grips. Unfortunately, not all the brothers were able to live up to their "obligation." In December, one was "charged with having violated the pledge on the P.M. of Dec. 6th," and a committee was named to look into it. He was later "stricken from the list." In January it was voted to "reobligate" another faltering brother, "and that no further penalty be attached in consideration of the fact that he made a voluntary confession and that it is his first offense."

The business part of the meetings was concerned with reports and routine items like "Moved and carried that an appropriation of \$.26 be made for stationery and kerosene." In October the "minutes of the last meeting were *not* read and approved because they could not be found." In March 1884 a special collection of \$1.35 was taken to help the Maine organization circulate temperance literature in every school district in that state. On one occasion it was voted to "enter proceedings against Fisher's saloon," and Lodge members "were instructed to furnish the Committee with all evidence in their possession." Later meetings merely reported "progress."

The program part of the meeting was known as "Good of the Order." Remarks, readings and recitations were the main content. One brother "related the sad fate of a schoolmate of his who yielded to the cup." Readings carried titles like "Price of a Drink", "The Drunkard's Soliloquy", "Which Is More Harmful, Whiskey or Lager", "Only Sixteen", "Eve's Lamentation on Leaving Paradise." If the time allotted for the meeting was exhausted, readings were interrupted in the middle.

By September 1884, increasing difficulty was experienced in providing programs. On the 16th the "Committee on Program not putting in an appearance, the Good of the Order consisted of a few remarks." It was then resolved that for the next meeting "each one present be prepared with something for Good of the Order." Apparently attendance and interest declined, for in mid-December 1884, the Lodge adjourned over the holidays, and there is no record that it ever resumed.

## *Simplified Spelling?*

*Besides giving a quaint description of northern Ohio of more than a hundred years ago, this letter furnishes an example of phonetics which should interest the exponents of simplified spelling. The writer, Salmon Pangman, was from the town of Champlain. The letter is dated December 28, 1837, written from Elyria, Ohio. (From the McLellan Collections.)*

Mr Bartlet Nye

as i now have a few moments of Lasure time i feel it my Duty to inform you of our helths & also of our Long Journey we have injoind a good masure of helth since we Left Champlain & also our a quaintance air all well; we had a vary Rough time through the Lake & i will a Shure you that a Bout all the Pasengers on board felt the Afects of the heavy Seas that tost us to & fro; at all avence i dont want ever to go through in as Rough a time as that was it was a vary Large Steam Boat & well fited for the Buisness it was the Boat *Comidore Perry* Sevrel times Just Before we got in to Cleavelin the white Caps Broke so heavy that they Roled on to the Deck of the Boat in the senter Deeper than the Capt ever Saw them Before

i found after i was a Bout two or three milds from Bufalo that i was not on Lake Champlain

i Should advise any Person that is Coming in to this Cuntry not to Come as Late in the fall as i did not onley on the a Count of the Ruffness of the wether & Lakes But it is not so good a time to git in to Buisness as it is in the Spring or Sumer

how ever i dont no as i have any grate Reson to Complain, as Samul had taken a good mill & wanted help to keep it a going i Joind him & have one half of the ernings of the mill for 18 months We Pay \$150 one hundred & fifty dollars for the use of the mill for the 18 months which i think it a good Bargin if we git as many Logs as we Can saw in the Life of our Lease i think that we Cannot miss of making Some thing out of the Mill the mill has always Ben well stockt & we air not out of Logs yet But as thare is not any snow here yet i think that we shall Be out Before we git any Slaing it will not Be But a Short time Before we shall have Slaing

Now i will State to you the Price of the article of Provisions in this village wheat is worth \$1.13 to \$125 cents Corn 50c, Ry 75c oats 38c Potaters 25 & 31c Porke 12c Salt fresh Porke 6 to 8c hogs that way 2 & 3 hundred hay is \$6.50 cents pr tun Such a horse as i Sold you is worth \$15.00 [?] good working oxen from \$75 to \$80 Dollars, fresh Beef is worth from 4 to 5 cents & i Can tell you that money Dos not grow on the ohio Brush No more than it Dos on the Pine tree tops in Champlain & as for Riting to you that i am Perfectly satisfide with the ohio i shall Not at Present for i Can not tell till next fall By that time i shall have A Chance to make up my mind. . . .

Abner Squiers has had Rather Bad Luck three weaks a go his house & Prity much all he had was Birnt the Nabers turnd out & helpt him put up a Nother But Not as good a one as he had Before he has got 50 akers of Good Land But Not Vary well Braut tue as yet he has Ben graity trubeld with sore ies so that he has Ben Laid up for 3 or 4 weaks at a time he Caries on the Coopering Bisness he Contracted for to make one thousand flour Barrels for the grist mill in Eleria for 31 cents Per Barrel he says he Can make money at the Contract he has maid a Bout two hundred & fifty all Ready and intends to Continue the Bisness till he finishes the Contract he has got 2 men to worke for him at the Job . . . .

i must Draw my Letr to a Close, & i Remain your frind untill Deth & i always Considered you the same to me . . . . Do not fale of Riting me a nancer . . . .

give my Best Respects to the old frinds of Champlain as they feel nearer to me now than they ever Did Before . . . .

Salmon Pangman

## *Local Boy Goes West: Darius Lobdell*

Darius J. Lobdell, known as Dyce, was a son of Mrs. Daniel Thew of Peru. In 1857, at the age of 18, he went to Wisconsin in search of fortune. There he worked at several jobs, including farming and teaching school at \$25 a month ("with what tenacity they cling to me to remain with them.") At times lonesome and discouraged, yet "I shall never come home until I am better off than when I left."

Desiring to move farther west, Dyce and a friend travelled 300 miles, only to be robbed of all their money. They borrowed to get back to Wisconsin, where Dyce took whatever work he could get.

The call of the west was not to be denied, however, and by the winter of 1859 he was in Osawatimie, Kansas Territory, the scene of John Brown's abolitionist violence. He rented a farm, only to give it up because of poor health and depressed spirits: "I have no enjoyment nor have I had for a long time. While I was on the road to Kansas darkness came upon me and in this time the tempter came. . . . It is dark and dreary and I am led by satanic hands."

Yet he held on, and eventually got his health back, for "I cannot think of coming home to be laughed at as a homesick boy." He asked his family to loan him \$100 to put into ten acres of good land.

He married in 1860 and over the years his family grew. He owned several yoke of oxen and during 1861 and 1862 he hired out to drive teams for the government. This occasioned long absences from home, a worry to his wife because of the violence all around them. The Civil War had brought renewed feuding in Kansas, but Dyce wrote: "We have had war ever since we have been in Kansas and it has become so natural to us that we cannot get ourselves to look upon it as such a horror." His wife evidently felt differently, and regretted having to bring up her children in such an unsettled place. But Dyce had become almost bloodthirsty in his feelings against the rebels who would disrupt the nation.

After a year of teaching school, he volunteered in a Kansas regiment in 1863, feeling that "when it becomes necessary to draft, it is time every true man took the field. Those who hang back now are either cowards or traitors." His wife and children lived with her parents. Dyce spent a year and a half in uniform and rose to be a captain. "This is the most glorious occupation that I have ever been engaged in. It is where glory is to be found and a name won." Some of his campaigns in Kansas and Missouri were hazardous indeed. One of them involved a thousand-mile march and six hard battles in forty days against a much larger foe. During 1864 he disowned as traitors all his eastern relatives who did not vote for Lincoln.

Out of uniform and back at school teaching, Dyce had an optimistic view of the future, with a soldier's bounty to give him a start. "Sometimes I think of you that are living back there in that rocky, rough and cold country almost with pity, and although I am poor I would not come back to live for the best farm in the country."

He tried clerking at \$600 a year; when he became the bookkeeper, he bought a house and two lots in town. However, family illnesses, general hard times and the loss of his job made him gloomy: "It seems that I am doomed to perpetual trouble and that everything is combined against me." He asked his family for a loan.

Dyce never mastered the Kansas environment. He combined farming with a series of other occupations which sometimes prospered, sometimes faltered. Plagues of grasshoppers or the drought killed the crops, the depression of the 1870's ruined him, and poor health laid him low. He had typhoid fever, and was out of work for over a year with a mysterious palsy. His oldest son, Charles, kept the farm going.

In later years, his chief satisfaction was the good start he had given his four children. Among them were two school teachers and a County Attorney.

*(Based on letters in the library of the State College in Plattsburgh.)*

### *Then or Now?*

“On Sunday night last, the store of John A. Douglas in this village was broken into by prying open the shutters of one of the windows in the rear of the building, and cutting out the sash. About 50 cents in change, a few small articles, and some raisins and sugar were taken. On Tuesday evening the store of Thomas Goldsmith was also broken open. Here the burglars were alike unsuccessful—there was no money in the store; but in their search they found about thirty dollars in counterfeit bills and bills of broken banks, some of which had been lying in the desk for fifteen years. On Thursday, one of the gang offered some of the money at one of our stores: he was suspected, took to his heels, and after a hot race was captured. . . . He is now in jail with three others implicated in the transaction. . . . This will probably put a stop to the fashionable amusement of store-breaking for the present.”

PLATTSBURGH REPUBLICAN  
*August 12, 1843*

### *Automobile Speed Limit*

The Plattsburgh city ordinance regarding the speed of automobiles is as follows:

Sec. 1. No person shall operate a motor vehicle on any public street in the city of Plattsburgh at a greater rate than one mile in six minutes.

Sec. 2. Every person who shall violate the provisions of this ordinance shall for every violation upon conviction be punished by a fine not exceeding the sum of \$50 and not less than the sum of \$3.00, and stand committed until such fine be paid, not exceeding, however, one day for each dollar of the fine.

This law is to be strictly enforced.

M. LEE ROCKWELL  
Chairman Police Committee  
*July 28, 1906*

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### *The Editors*

*welcome material for inclusion in these North Country Notes, as well as your comments and criticisms. Look through your scrapbooks and family papers for a few interesting items.*

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