

# NORTH COUNTRY NOTES

ISSUED OCCASIONALLY BY THE

CLINTON COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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No. 15

Allan S. Everest and Charles W. McLellan, Editors

Nov. 1963

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## *The Next Meeting*

will be held on Monday evening, Nov. 4, 1963, at 8:00 o'clock, in the Association Rooms over the Plattsburgh Public Library. The speaker will be DR. JOHN HARROLD, District Superintendent of Schools, who will talk on "THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SCHOOLS IN CLINTON COUNTY."

The public is cordially invited.

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## *Amendments*

The following are the Amendments to the Constitution of the Clinton County Historical Association recommended by the Board of Directors.

*Article 6, Section 1: to be amended to read:*

The Board of Directors shall consist of the officers, chairmen of committees, and additional directors, the total number of directors not to exceed fifteen (15) nor be less than ten (10). The directors who are not officers or chairmen of committees shall be appointed by the President for a period not to exceed three years. One-third of these directors shall be appointed each year.

Amendment to By-Laws of the Clinton County Historical Association.

*Article 2, Section 2: to be amended to read:*

A simple majority of the members of the Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum.

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## *Christmas Carol*

The beloved Christmas carol "We Three Kings of Orient Are" was written in 1857 by a young clergyman in New York City. Its composer, Dr. John Henry Hopkins, was pastor of Trinity Church in Plattsburgh from 1872 to 1876.

A well-known and colorful clergyman in his day, Dr. Hopkins spent much of his life in the midst of fierce ecclesiastical controversies. These battles were soon forgotten, as was the authorship of the carol. For many years the music he wrote for "We Three Kings" was mistakenly attributed to Giovanni Palestrina, the great 15th century Italian composer. Today Dr. Hopkins is again remembered for his contribution to the Christmas season.

## Redford Glass

About one hundred thirty years ago, an event took place in New York which was to keep the name Redford familiar among the collectors of early American glass. In the fall of 1831, the Redford Glass Company started the manufacture of crown window glass.

In March 1831, Cook, Corning and John S. Foster had arrived at Redford to begin the construction of a company town. Work was pushed with such speed that the necessary buildings were completed in about seven months. In October the first glass was turned out by the company. Some records state that the cost of the factory was \$50,000; others state its worth at nearer \$100,000. That year there were 175 workers; during the peak of production it had approximately 300 employees.

All leases, contracts or deeds of tenements on the company's land contained a clause forbidding the sale of "ardent spirits" on the premises. However, beer and ale did not come under the restriction.

Because of the shortage of coins, the company soon found it necessary to issue script in 3, 5, 6, 10, 12, 15, 50 and 75 cent denominations. On the 50 and 75 cent denominations appeared a picture of the Redford Glass Works; no other pictures are known to exist.

The factory itself was 12 feet high, 80 feet wide and 150 feet long. It contained two furnaces, with six pots in each furnace. When one failed, the other was started. In the making of glass there were two melts each week. When the melt was ready for blowing, a "call boy" summoned the 20 glass blowers from their homes. The blowers took a "gather" on the end of a blowpipe and blew it into a thin sphere. The sphere was then softened by the intense heat of the furnace, and simultaneously whirled rapidly. Through centrifugal force the sphere of glass extended into a circular disc or "crown" which sometimes measured five feet in diameter. The crown was then removed, cooled, and cut into small pieces. The scar at the center of the crown was considered almost a waste product by the company. Today, these scar panes, commonly called "bull's eye" panes, are rare and are considered collectors' items.

For about 100 years the gable window of the Albert Banker homestead contained a large pane of bull's eye glass measuring 46 inches in diameter. It is reported to have been sold in 1930 for \$500. It is supposed to be in a museum in Delaware.

The chief ingredient used in the making of the glass was white flint sand. This contributed to the outstanding quality of the glass. The formula for making Redford glass was kept closely guarded. Valuable papers and the secret formula were kept in a secret room on the second floor of the "company house" (Tromblay House). The enclosed porch of this house contained 182 bull's eye panes. When fire destroyed this home only 70 of the panes of glass were saved.

Mr. Foster, a genius in glassmaking, was the company's first superintendent. He had vowed that he would never give the formula to a white man, but he did tell a Negro, Martin Tankard, the meltmaster. The latter was very successful in its use. However, when asked to refrain from smoking while at work, he quit. But after several batches of glass had been spoiled, he was given his way and reinstated.

A price list dated October 1850 set forth 382 different prices for various sizes and grades of window glass. A single piece of glass 11 by 8 inches, grade A, sold for ten cents, grade B for seven cents and grade C for five cents. The price increased with the size.

The Redford company allowed its blowers in their spare time to make hand pieces for themselves and friends. The South Jersey decorative technique was used by the glass workers, as is shown by the threading and crimping found in the lily pad pattern. The superimposed "gather" was tooled into slender stems terminating in roughly

circular or oval pads. Because they looked like lily pads, the pattern was given that name. The glass blowers were migratory craftsmen and their skills traveled with them.

The company produced glass in two colors. The predominant color was a bright aquamarine and the other was a clear seagreen. The better grade was the first color while the cheaper grade was the latter color, known as the Saranac Crown Glass.

During the productive years between 1831 and 1851, the company enjoyed success. The product was used throughout the United States and endorsed by the architect of the United States Capitol. The company's downfall was brought about by the competition developed by the glass producers of Pennsylvania. They found cheaper fuel in the coal mines of that state than the wood which could be obtained in the Redford area.

While absolute identification of Redford glass is sometimes impossible without an authentic history, this is not usually so in Clinton County. There are today, in the vicinity of Redford, families that cherish Redford glassware which has been handed down from those who worked in the factory. The village of Redford, with a population of only a few hundred, has no industry. However, its name will endure in the annals of the glass industry for the outstanding crown glass once made here.

*Submitted by Mrs. David LaMora, Redford, N. Y.*

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## *The W. C. T. U.*

The Women's Christian Temperance Union of Clinton County held its thirtieth convention at Ellenburg Depot on June 11, 1897. The president was Mrs. Frances Hall, last local survivor of the Delord family.

Each of the day's three sessions started with devotional exercises, and continued with business matters and papers given by members and state officials. The scope of the work of the Union is suggested by its committees, among them: Young Women's Branch, County Fair, Temperance Literature, Mothers' Meetings, Sabbath School Work, Narcotics, Influencing the Press, and Prison and Jail.

One of the papers of the day, delivered by Mrs. Hiram Heyworth of Peru, was on "Wise Methods to Induce Workers to Join the W.C.T.U." Evidence of masculine influence behind the scenes is afforded by the fact that a man, Henry G. Dean, wrote her paper for her. The writer was concerned that many temperance workers chose to work outside the W.C.T.U. He described their work as likely to be short-lived and "meteor-like."

Exploring the reasons why many did not join the Union, he listed neglect, as well as prejudice against Union members as fanatics using undesirable methods and holding strange beliefs. He advised a campaign of facts about the society, which would show the great bond that holds all temperance workers together: "absolute freedom from the power and presence of intoxicants," from the "sorrow-producing, death-dealing fluid." He was sure the Union was broad enough in operation to provide satisfying work for any woman — "a harness, so to speak, that will fit her, and with which she can do more and better work than she could without it."

*(From the archives of the College Library at Plattsburgh)*

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**Book Review** Dr. Herbert Donovan has recently enriched North Country history with his book, *Fort Covington and Her Neighbors, A History of Three Towns*. It includes Bombay, Hogansburg and Westville, is illustrated, and covers history from the beginning to the present, as well as legends and traditions of the area. It may be obtained for \$7.50 from O'Hare Books, 715 Broadway, New York 3, N. Y.

## Potatoes

The diary of George Heyworth of Peru reminds us that Clinton County in 1881 was an important potato-growing and shipping area, and that the Peru railroad station was a busy place. The writer raised potatoes as well as buying and selling in large quantities. Since Canada was one of his sources of supply, "I must learn to talk French right away for it will help me in the future."

In the spring Mr. Heyworth bought up potatoes locally, sorted out the culls, and loaded freight cars for shipment. His Canadian purchases involved him in customs problems. Thus on May 7th: "Up at 5 & started for Montreal. Lord, a headache. Got to Montreal at 9.30 & had to run all over the city to get certificates for cars, etc. etc. The consul charged me \$7 which other buyers said was too much. Got home at 6 PM & found my little wife very glad to see me." (His wife was Mattie Day.)

And on May 12th: "Up at 3.30 AM. Went to Depot to take train. Fog so thick, couldn't signal & they didn't stop." So he returned home and took a later train to Rouses Point. There he straightened out shipping problems on the Grand Trunk Railroad, and also cleared a carload of potatoes through customs.

He usually shipped downstate, often to New York City. Sometimes he sent potatoes, sometimes starch made in the Goshen factory beside the Little Ausable. He filled an order from Port Henry for one barrel of starch at four cents, but he authorized his downstate agent to sell starch in New York at a half cent less if necessary.

During the summer he bought potatoes for future delivery at ten cents net a hundredweight. The harvest season was another time of strenuous activity. For example, on September 1st he loaded four and a half cars of starch. He put in some long hard days in Peru and on the road. It is no wonder that his diary sometimes ended with: "Got home with headache at 6 PM" or "Some tired tonight."

*(From the archives of the College Library at Plattsburgh)*

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