

NORTH COUNTRY NOTES

ISSUED BY THE

CLINTON COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

No. 364

Shirley L. Koester, Editor

June 1999

The Next Meeting

Will be on June 7, 1999 in the first floor meeting room at the Government Center, 137 Margaret Street, Plattsburgh, at 7:30 p.m. Steven Engelhart, Executive Director of Adirondack Architectural Heritage, will present "Historic Preservation: What's It All About?" This program provides a general introduction to the importance of preserving our nation's built environment. It will promote understanding of the necessity of preserving our nation's built environment and the importance of maintaining our most tangible links to the past, fostering community and national identity.

Examples presented will include ways in which historic architecture and historic preservation offer us a higher quality of space. The second part of the program focuses on the range of historic places which deserve our attention, from the obvious to the obscure, from the homes of the rich to the homes of the workers.

This program is made possible with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency, and also by the Institute of Museum and Library Sciences, a federal agency serving the public by strengthening museums and libraries. It is free and open to the public.

An Echo of the Battle of Plattsburgh in Orkney

Pat and David Martin are just back from a visit to far away Orkney, north of Scotland. There they discovered, in Stromness, that the home of a Battle of Plattsburgh veteran is still standing and pointed out to visitors. Known as Speddings, this prominent, tall, stone building rises from an attractive garden just back from the harbor in the north part of town. It is also called the "Lieutenant's House," because it was built and occupied by Lieutenant James Robertson of the Royal Navy, until his death in 1860. Robertson was commander of the Beresford gunboat, at the attack on the American squadron at the Battle of Plattsburgh during the War of 1812.

Members Missed

There have been many who have contributed to the mission and ongoing work of the Clinton County Historical Association. Ruth Hecht, who was very devoted, serving as President of the Board of Trustees and contributing her expertise regarding our collections, died January 1, 1999. Without the interest and hard work of members such as Ruth, we would be unable to carry on our work of preserving the history of the county.

Frank Harrison Graves Grocery Store

Frank Graves founded a grocery store in Plattsburgh in 1882, which was successfully operated by family members for nearly eighty years. First established on Standish Street and moving to larger quarters at the corner of Bridge and Durkee Street. in 1895 (this site was later occupied for many years by Wolfe's Shoe Store).

Moving again in 1904, Mr. Graves purchased the block at 15 Bridge Street. In 1917, the business was incorporated and the name changed to F. H. Graves and Sons, Inc., when his two sons, Harry and Frank B. Graves entered the business. Some time later, around 1920, Harry B. Graves sold his interest in the business which continued operating until 1946, when Frank B. Graves and Frank Morrison sold the business to Donald Graves, grandson of the founder.

In 1949, the business was moved to Clinton Street, taking over the grocery store formerly owned by George Weir and later by Guy Herron. Donald Graves sold his interest in the business in 1953. With his departure the last member of the founding family left the business. The business was again moved in 1956 to the corner of North Beekman and the Tom Miller Road. Earle Ladd sold his interest to Norman Swift in 1957. The business was operated at this location for a few years.

Several reminiscences come to mind as I write this. The store was the first grocery to change over from a horse drawn delivery wagon to an automobile within the city! As a youngster I remember the row of silver dollars, recessed into the wooden floor under small square pieces of glass, which no doubt were a topic of conversation, when first put in place. I remember Dad saying that during the millionaire training camp at Plattsburgh Barracks during WW I business increased so much that at one time the store employed sixteen help. Up to the early 1940's two delivery trucks were kept busy year around.

The founder of the business resided at 26 South Catherine which is now the residence of Allen Everest. Frank B. Graves resided at 24 South Catherine. Dr. Robert Graves is the grandson of the founder of the business.

Reminiscences of Frank Morrison, Jr., January 3, 1984

**THE SIXTH ANNUAL
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ANTIQUE, CLASSIC AND EXOTIC
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SUNDAY JULY 11TH, 10 AM TO 4 PM

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Volunteer for an hour or so on the day of the show to help in this important fundraiser. Call: 561-0340.

Benefit The Clinton County Historical Association and The Foundation of CVPH Medical Center.

CLINTON COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
48 Court Street
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