

NORTH COUNTRY NOTES

Issued Monthly By The Clinton County Historical Association

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CCHA PROGRAMS

Our 1989/1990 program series ended on a high note with Jim Lindgren's informative and entertaining slide/lecture on the history of Plattsburgh's architecture. Attendance at the series has been at an all-time high, doubtless due to the fine programs arranged by Lois Sheats and Joann Perry. Past program chairmen Jack Myers and Jim Dawson also provided lectures to whet the appetites of local history buffs. We look forward to a brand new series beginning in September.

Announcement of the approval of a grant application and an invitation to the White House are not often received in one day, let alone in the same letter. But this has happened to the Historical Association and its museum. The County Museum's request for funding from the Institute of Museum Services has been approved for the coming year and the museum's director/curator has been invited to the White House for the award ceremony which will be hosted by Mrs. George Bush. The Association's Board of Directors decided that CCHA should be represented at the ceremony on May 18 since it is a unique opportunity for the Association and its director/curator. The IMS funding initiative is a highly competitive process; in 1989 IMS, a federal agency serving the nation's museums, awarded general operating support funds to 400 museums out of the 1,355 applications received by the agency. CCHA did not receive funding in 1989 although it has done so several times in the past decade. The application process is lengthy and complex, therefore IMS funding approval is a cause for celebration.

Thanks to the industrious research efforts in the National Archives of member Everett Fuller, we are gathering documentation on the construction of the Valcour Island Lighthouse and the early days of operation of the beacon. This information will be invaluable in our bid to place the lighthouse on the National Register of Historic Places. CCHA is fortunate in having members such as Mr. Fuller who live in other parts of the country and are willing to assist us in research of this kind.

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

As so often happens, important acquisitions arrive out of the blue. A recent example is an original deed of land in Clinton County, its parchment beautifully preserved. The deed's arrival in the museum follows a letter of inquiry from Mrs. Beryl MacDonald in Salem, Oregon, whose mother-in-law owned the document. It documents the deed of land from Nicholas Bayard, Rebecca Bayard, Philip Livingston & his wife, Martin Hoffman & his wife, to Jonas Addoms and John Reeve, the executors of Simon Reeve, deceased. The date is May 19, 1795. Some research will be required to pinpoint the location of the land in question since the 'maple tree marked number three' and the 'white pine tree numbered ten' are unlikely to exist today! But references to land owned by Zephaniah Platt and William Gilliland, and an ore bed belonging to Philip Skene, will be helpful. Many thanks to the MacDonald family for preserving the document and returning it to us in Clinton County.

SPRING TOURS

On June 7 the museum will host a number of elementary school classes for their annual spring field trip. This program is held in conjunction with an outdoor education program at the Kent-Delord House Museum. Volunteer Connie Wheeler assists in conducting tours for the children, in addition to acting as a weekend docent along with regulars Beth Brush and Ruth Patterson.

A delightful result of school tours at the museum is the letters of thanks we often receive from the children. Here is a sampling, written by Mr. Dewey's 4th grade at Cumberland Head School:

"Thanks for the great tour! My favorite thing was the old American flag. I learned a lot of things about Clinton County that I never knew before. I really had a great time!" (Geoffrey Bosworth)

"I really enjoyed coming to the museum. My favorite part about it was seeing the anchors and musket shots. Thank you for showing us everything." (Melissa Brown)

"I'd like to thank you for a wonderful time, and I hope I can come back soon. If I ever get to go back, I would definitely look at the display with the uniform and sword first. I certainly hope that my class being there has enriched my life as much as it has yours." (Dan Menard)

"June 9, 1816: There was a heavy fall of snow and sleighing was good from 'the city' (Saxe's Landing) to the five Nations (East Chazy). Seth Graves came out with his big covered sleigh, drawn by four horses, and with the Rev. Mr. Byington, Deacon Wells, Deacon Ransom and others, reined up to Francis Chantonette's Inn, in grand style." - 'Three Centuries In Champlain Valley.'

WHERE IS IT NOW?

The soon to be celebrated centenary of Hotel Champlain by Clinton Community College put us in mind of the following letter:

Edward Hall, Esq., A.G.M., Lyon Mountain, N.Y.

Dear Sir:-

A short time ago Hon. H.G. Burleigh presented to the Bluff Point Hotel Co., what is termed a "Skag Iron", which came from the wreck of the 'Royal Savage'. It is made of copper, and must weigh, I should think, 150 or 200 lbs.

I was down to the Bluff to-day and told them to ship it to Lyon Mountain to my address. When it gets there, I want it cleaned up. I suppose Hubbell can do this with some sort of acid, and make it look bright and nice. I then want to put it in the Hotel Office in some conspicuous spot, for exhibition.

I wish when it gets there, that you would have it attended to.

Very truly,

A.L. Inman

The letter is dated July 21, 1890 and is written on the letterhead of the Chateaugay Ore & Iron Co., Plattsburgh, N.Y. whose office was located at one time in the building at the corner of Oak and Clinton Streets, now occupied by the Court Library. Smith M. Weed was then the president of the company, H.M. Olmsted was treasurer, M.F. Parkhurst was cashier and Alvin N. Inman, also known as a local architect partial to the English Tudor style, was the manager.

We'd love to know what happened to that chunk of iron from the 'Royal Savage'!

Since 1977, when the first CCHA flea market took place in Trinity Park, Plattsburgh, we've experienced one chilly day and one early shower. Otherwise, the weather has always been perfect for the event. We are hoping for the same good luck on Saturday, July 7, although we try to avoid tempting fate by scheduling a rain date on the following day. In the May issue of NOTES we announced the reinstatement of a CCHA stall. One CCHA member, noted for her donation of high class junk, has already promised more of the same. All we ask is that items be delivered to City Hall no sooner than Friday evening or early Saturday morning, and that they be of some quality so that the Association does not have to dispose of unwanted junk at the end of the day. Please take a look in your attic or basement; your contribution can help boost the flea market's income and that's our big summer fundraising goal.

FAMILY NEWS

CCHA member Nancy Barbour from Cincinnati, Ohio stopped in the other day during a visit to the North Country. Last year Ms. Barbour donated the rifle plate and shield from one of "Aiken's Rifles", the guns presented by Congress to the young lads who volunteered for service in the Battle of Plattsburgh. Ira Allen Wood, a recipient of the rifle and an ancestor of Ms. Barbour, is described in "Campaigns & Engineers of the War of 1812-1815" as follows: 'Benjamin G. and Ira Allen Wood were in the defence of Plattsburgh, Sept. 11, 1814. They were among the last to return before the enemy, across the Saranac, on the naked string-pieces, the plank covering having been taken up already to prevent the British passing in force. While crossing one of the brothers caught a wounded man (Peters of Plattsburg) as he was falling into the stream, and carried him safely within our intrenchments.'

Courage and daring were family traits, apparently. In an earlier, different branch, the famed 39 year old Hannah Duston was captured by Indians in 1697 at Haverhill, Mass., along with others. The torture and murder of Hannah's baby so aroused her fury that when an opportunity to escape occurred, she secured a tomahawk and massacred four Indian adults and six children. Having removed their scalps, she could prove what had happened to her and collect the bounty paid by the Massachusetts Colony for Indian scalps at that time. Hannah's reputation as a woman who could do a hard day's work as well as any man was undoubtedly enhanced by this escapade.

The Haynes branch of this family produced several doctors, among them Dr. Samuel Haynes who owned property on the Saranac River, as identified in the 1869 atlas by Beers, Ellis & Soule. In that publication Dr. Haynes described himself as an 'Oculist and Aurist, Saranac and Plattsburgh, N.Y. Has given especial attention to the Medical and Surgical treatment of diseases of the Eye, Ear and Throat, the past sixteen years, and has had much practice and a large measure of success in diseases of these organs. For particulars address the above, with postage enclosed. Also send for Dr. Haynes' Circular, giving statement, &c, of cases treated from Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Vermont, Canada, New York &c,&c.'

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HAVE YOU RENEWED YOUR CCHA SUBSCRIPTION?



"GRADUATING FROM CITY HALL"

A special exhibit recently opened in the museum which honors the Centennial of State University College at Plattsburgh.

Highlights of the exhibit include photographs and memorabilia of the period immediately following the old Normal School's destruction by fire on January 26, 1929. During the subsequent crisis Mayor John H. McGaulley offered space in City Hall for students to continue attending classes while a new building (Hawkins Hall) was constructed. Several Normal School classes "graduated from City Hall" before the new school opened on September 13, 1932. One photograph shows the graduating class posing for a photographer on the steps of City Hall; in another, the students are marching past the Macdonough Monument en route to Margaret Street.

We offer special thanks to the following: Dr. Charles Warren and the college's Centennial Celebrations Committee for funding the exhibit; to Ida Jacques, Joseph Swinyer and Patty Bentley of Special Collections and the Feinberg Library for advice, assistance and loans, and to Cheryl Hogle and the Goldman family for loans of objects.

The exhibit will be on view until November 30 in Gallery 2.