

NORTH COUNTRY NOTES

Issued Monthly by the Clinton County Historical Association

48 Court St., Plattsburgh NY 12901, 518-561-0340

No. 298 PRESIDENT: David C. Stortz EDITOR: Helen W. Allan May 1993

MAY PROGRAM: ADIRONDACK THEME PARKS

"Theme Parks of the Adirondacks" is the program topic for CCHA's May meeting, scheduled for Monday, May 3, at 7:30 p.m. in the public meeting room of the County Government Center in Plattsburgh. Reid Larsen, director of the Essex County Historical Society, will present an illustrated talk about the theme parks which were developed along the route from Saratoga Springs to Lake Placid during the 1950s. The spread of attractions such as Fairyland Village, Storytown, The Indian Village, Frontier Town and Santa's Workshop had a significant impact on the meaning of the Adirondack experience, and they also provided a major economic boost for the area. This meeting is free and open to the public.

McMASTERS PRIZE WINNER NAMED

The McMasters Committee, chaired by Allan S. Everest, has announced the winner of this year's competition for historical writing about the North Country. The 1993 prize has been awarded to Lambert "Nick" Heyniger, a resident of Clinton County and Montreal, PQ, who submitted an essay entitled "**No Salties on Lake Champlain: Why an Improved Waterway Linking Montreal and New York Via the St. Lawrence, Richelieu and Hudson Rivers Was Defeated in the 1960s**". Mr. Heyniger's thoroughly researched essay deals with controversial attempts at that time to introduce ocean-going vessels into Lake Champlain and with the lengthy hearings that were held to discuss the pros and cons of the plan. The McMasters prize will be presented at CCHA's May meeting.

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS DONATED TO CCHA

The Historical Association recently received an important collection of manuscript materials from E. Saily Warren. Well known as a descendant of Peter Saily, one of the earliest settlers in Clinton County, Ms. Warren has entrusted to the Association a large number of early documents consisting of indentures, commissions, letters, bills and other documents. Ms. Warren's grandfather Frederick L.C. Saily and her parents Fred and Rhoda Warren were assiduous in their care of the family archive and as a result, a treasure trove of historical material exists in excellent condition. Included in the accession are documents such as Peter Saily's appointment in 1803 as one of three commissioners for the laying out and improving of a road through the northern towns of Washington, Clinton and Essex Counties, a letter from Thomas Macdonough early in 1812 expressing his fear that the U.S. Navy under his command on Lake Champlain could not resist a British invasion, and the list of expenses submitted to the U.S. Government by Caleb Nichols for damage done to his property on Crab Island during the battle of Plattsburgh, and for his work in burying American and British casualties on the island.

A HERO'S RETURN FROM CUBA, PART II

Last month North Country Notes presented the first installment of an account by Rouses Point resident Charles F. Gavreau of his experiences when he returned home after serving in Cuba in the Spanish-American War. The second installment is continued in this issue.

On arriving at the barrack grounds we found the road lined on both sides with 700 soldiers, who had enlisted while we were away, and as we passed them, they presented arms. On arriving at the mess hall we found that the ladies of Plattsburg had prepared a grand dinner for us. When we had all been seated at the different tables, a formal written message (of gratitude and commendation) was presented by Dr. Madden of Plattsburg, Chairman of Citizens' Executive Committee (to the officers and men of the 21st Regiment):

To this Captain Ebstein made the following reply:

"On behalf of the officers and men of the 21st Infantry, I return the sincere thanks of all for the magnificent reception extended to us on our return from the campaign in Cuba. It was indeed a glorious homecoming, the generous, bountiful and sincere welcome you extended to us has touched us deeply, and makes us more in love with Plattsburg and its patriotic citizens than ever—God bless you all!"

Many of my own townspeople came down to welcome us, and having my own town band with us, all the members of whom I knew, made it very pleasant for me.

After dinner we were given our liberty for awhile, and many of us took advantage of it and took in the county fair which was being held at Plattsburg that week. I went with some of the band boys, who were very kind to me, and would not allow me to spend a cent, which I appreciated, as I was not very flush with funds at that time. That same night a beautiful display of fireworks was given on the parade grounds. I retired very early that evening as I was thoroughly tired out after all the excitement of the past few days.

The new recruits who had enlisted while we were away had pitched their tents on the parade grounds and we occupied the quarters. In the meantime some of my friends had asked Captain Bonsteil, who was the company commander, to let me go home for a few days' visit, and not long after, through the intercession of Sergeant Cassemyer, I was given a seven days' leave of absence, and I was not long in taking the train for Rouses Point; and on arriving there, the reception I received is something I will never forget.

I was met at the station, much to my surprise, by the band, and the whole town seemed to have turned out to greet me. I was escorted through the main streets, with the band playing national airs, as far as my father's store, with colored light and fireworks, where a reception was held, and where I received congratulations and hand-shakes from all my old friends. I appreciate that this was due to the fact that the excitement of attending a war of such importance to the nation was going on, and that I was the only person from the town who had been engaged in the Spanish-American war.

I remained home for only five days, as I continued to feel worse each day, and then returned to Plattsburg, where I was taken sick with malarial fever and was confined at the hospital at the Post, with a very high temperature. I had never been very sick before, but I certainly made up for lost time. Every

bed in the hospital was taken up by the sick who had returned from the war. After three weeks or so I commenced to get better and was soon ready to return to my company for duty.

Up to this time most of the guard duty work had been done by the recruits who had enlisted to go the Philippines and during the rest of 1898 and 1899, we were kept very busy drilling, until the general order (No. 40) that the President had made came, "That all men who had enlisted at the time war was declared, had the privilege to leave the army," But I did not care to take advantage of this order to take my discharge, as I had heard that the 21st Infantry was soon to leave for the Philippines, and I was anxious and willing to do more service, and did not care to leave my company. But in order to do so, I had to sign certain papers, declaring my intention to remain with the army until the rest of the three years' service were up. Many of the soldiers took advantage of this offer and returned to their homes.

During the winter the drilling was done in the basement of the quarters and every week we had musical drill at the drill hall, the 21st Infantry band furnishing the music for the purpose.

I spent a very pleasant winter at the Plattsburg Barracks before leaving for the Philippines, as we had very little guard duty to do or what is termed in army talk, "nights in".

Charles Gauvreau left for the Philippines on April 10, 1899. The regiment, 1350 strong, consisting of 12 companies and a band, lined up on the Barracks' parade ground. In his words, "Again we experienced one of the sad features of military life, seeing wives, mothers and sweethearts of the soldiers bid farewell to those they loved, in many instances for the last time, perhaps, never to lay eyes on them again."

WHAT'S NEW IN THE SHOP

New merchandise continues to arrive in the shop. Recently the inventory was enriched by two generous donations from CCHA members. A gift from Margaret Engelhart includes four china collector's plates. Three books which should be of particular interest to those interested in area history and in the Civil War were received from Harold and Stella Boire. Two of the plates are blue-patterned Wedgwood: one has a portrait of Ulysses S. Grant, and the other commemorates the Fort Ticonderoga Bicentennial in 1955. Another blue-patterned plate is a memento of W.M. Pike & Son of Rock Island, Que. and bears a 1928 calendar around its rim. The fourth plate, white-glazed with black lettering and design, is inscribed "Royal Savage Inn, Plattsburg N.Y."

One of the recently arrived books is *The Dutchess County Regiment, the 150th New York State Volunteer Infantry in the Civil War*, written by members of the regiment and published in 1907. The other is a two-volume set, *The Genealogical and Family History of the County of Jefferson*, written by R.A. Oakes and published in 1905. Please let us know if you are interested in any of these new items.

Even if the above merchandise is not on your shopping list, you should visit the museum shop to see the recently arrived gift items and antique collectibles. Two beautiful lighted display cases have been graciously donated by CCHA members Philip and Shirley Gordon, and they show off the newly arrived merchandise to best advantage.

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MUSEUM RECEIVES F.H.S. AWARD

Clinton County Historical Museum is one of twelve institutions in New York State selected to participate in the 1993 Regional Collection Environment Monitoring Project. Administered by the Federation of Historical Services, an organization serving the Capital District and northern New York counties, the project's goal is to gather data that each institution can use to provide a proper conservation environment. Monitoring equipment will be placed in the museum for a year, beginning in May, 1993, to collect data for seasonal changes, light levels and the effects of heating and cooling on the museum's environment. Participation in the project is ideally timed as CCHA adjusts to its occupancy of the building at 48 Court Street.

CCHA OFFICE ACQUIRES A LASER PRINTER

Although our readers may not have noticed any change, this issue and the previous issue of *North Country Notes* are distinguished by a major step forward in their production—they were printed on CCHA's new laser printer. The purchase of this wonderful piece of equipment, which generates high-quality, camera-ready copy directly from CCHA's Macintosh computer, was made possible by the generosity of Ruth Hecht and Bill and Lynn Woythaler. Mrs. Hecht and Mr. Woythaler are both members of CCHA's Board of Directors. With the addition of the Apple LaserWriter IIf to its computer equipment, CCHA now has the capability of creating in-house virtually all of its publications: *North Country Notes*, *The Antiquarian*, brochures, special mailings, and even books.

GENEALOGY CENTER OPENS

The Historical Association has just received notice of the opening of the Family History/ Genealogical Research Center of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints at 22 Dennis Avenue in Plattsburgh. The center indicates that it has access to over 184 million family names from more than 60 nations, as well as copies of parish registers, census and court records, cemetery records and a variety of other genealogical resources. Call 561-1092 for information.