

NORTH COUNTRY NOTES

Issued Monthly by the Clinton County Historical Association

48 Court Street, Plattsburgh NY 12901, 518-561-0340

No. 310 PRESIDENT: Mark A. McCullough EDITOR: Helen W. Allan June 1994

JUNE PROGRAM

The Historical Association ends its spring series of programs with an invitation to members and friends to spend an evening in the museum at 48 Court Street. Board members, docents and staff will be on hand to interpret exhibits and comment on some recent acquisitions which will be displayed for the first time. Don't miss this opportunity to enjoy "An Evening At The Museum" and share the Association's pride in the historic building it occupies in downtown Plattsburgh. The date is Monday, June 6; the time is 7:30 p.m. Refreshments will be served and the public is invited to attend.

ANTIQUÉ SHOW & SALE / VINTAGE CAR MEET

All systems are go for CCHA's grand summer fundraiser on July 9 and 10 in the grounds of Clinton Community College. Show manager Craig Koste says that dealers have signed up from Florida to Maine and Texas to Ohio. Several CCHA members have volunteered to help staff the event, but we still need more assistance. If you can spare a few hours on either day, please call the office or return the enclosed slip. This event is extremely important in the Association's financial picture, especially now that the museum has the fiscal responsibility of maintaining its location at 48 Court Street. Your volunteer hours will count for a lot in supporting the museum and its programs.

Here's the schedule for the two-day event:

SATURDAY, JULY 9

Antiques: 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Car meet: 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

SUNDAY, JULY 10

Antiques: 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Car meet: 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

(Judging at 2:00 p.m.)

General admission to the event is \$3.00 for adults and \$2.00 for children. Several types of food will be available. CCHA has also scheduled displays and demonstrations featuring doll houses, model railroads, chair caning, Oriental rug repair, stained glass repair, and (Saturday only) an old-fashioned photo booth.

A PLATTSBURGH GIRL: FRIEND OF ROYALTY

“How many know the name of Emma Lajeunesse? She was born in Chambly, Que., and came to Plattsburgh with her family. Her father was an organist and music teacher. They lived on River Street, about where the Columbe Court now stands in City Hall Place. Later they lived on Margaret Street across from the Mooers house (near the Cornelia Street corner) and later in the wing of the Woodward house on Broad Street.

“Emma’s mother died and is buried in the Irish cemetery across from the Barracks where Emma used to stop to visit the grave. After her mother’s death the family moved to Albany where she sang in the choir of St. Joseph’s Catholic Church. Rev. John Conroy recognized the remarkable talent of the young girl, organized a testimonial for her in 1869, and on the proceeds of this concert the young woman began her European career in Paris and later in Milan. Her debut as Madame Albani in 1870 made her an instantaneous success. Emperor Wilhelm I named her the ‘First Singer of the Royal Household’. In London she became the favorite singer and close friend of Queen Victoria.

“Once every summer Queen Victoria drove from Balmoral Castle in Scotland to the Highland home of Madame Albani-Gye, where the latter entertained her at an informal tea. In return for Madame’s appearance at Court to sing for the Queen, Victoria treated this as a private affair, with no one else present. Madame Albani later wrote an article for the *Ladies’ Home Journal* entitled ‘Victoria At My Tea Table’. In it she said, ‘I see Victoria as a woman, never as a Queen’.

“Emma Lajeunesse took the name of Albani because of the great affection she had for the city and people of Albany. There is a full-length portrait of her in the Albany Club, and she sang in Albany four times at the height of her career. She passed through Plattsburgh en route to Montreal on several occasions, but apparently she never sang here. Madame died at the age of 77, having been acclaimed in every great opera house in the world.

“My aunt, Alice McMasters Livingston, heard her sing once, probably in New York. After the performance she spoke to her, and Madame Albani recalled that they had gone to school together in Plattsburgh.”

Editor’s note: This piece was written by Emily Alice McMasters in 1967. Miss McMasters was a curator of the Historical Association’s collections for many years.

JULY 5, 1888: “I began to attend the Barracks as Post Surgeon. This is in place of Dr. Owen, who has been ordered to Fort Leavenworth, I believe. I go every morning and am present at sick call at 6.30. I am to have \$2.50 per visit and \$2.00 for every second visit necessary to be made in any one day.”

A Doctor At All Hours, David S. Kellogg, M.D., ed. Allan S. Everest, 1970.

PLATTSBURG BOYS BAND

The Plattsburg Boys Band was formed in the early 1930s. It was sponsored by the Plattsburgh Kiwanis Club.

Professor Landon Street, professor of music at the Plattsburgh Normal School, was the band leader and Professor John Rusterholtz assisted him. Band members were between twelve and eighteen years of age. Instrumental lessons were given by Professor Street, C. Giambruno, Peter Blessant (both members of the famous 26th Infantry band) and other local musicians. The band participated in local parades and other musical events. Band practice was held at the YMCA once a week.

In March each year the band would go to Syracuse University and compete against other bands from throughout the State. The band was successful in winning either first or second place many times. In 1933 while in Syracuse the band members and Kiwanians who acted as escorts attended a stage show featuring the Don Redmond band and vaudeville acts. From these acts the idea spread to put on a show at home to help toward the expenses of the band. The costumes were designed and assembled by Mrs. Joel Scheier and other Kiwanis wives. Practice for the show was held at the YMCA. The variety show was held May 22, 1933 at the Strand Theatre to a standing room only audience.

Professor Street was taken sick and left Plattsburgh in 1935. Ken Hodgeman, Drum Major of the 26th Infantry band, replaced Prof. Street. The band members formed the nucleus of many local high school bands after they disbanded in the late 1930s.

Editor's note: This piece was contributed by CCHA member Charles Raymond who donated an original program for the 1993 concert to the museum collection.

A MESSAGE FROM THE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

There's no one more important to the Historical Association than its members. If you have not renewed your subscription yet, please drop your check in the mail soon. Your contribution is tax-deductible - and it helps us to maintain the museum and its many educational programs. Without the support of our members, we could not publish *North Country Notes*, the *Antiquarian*, or the many books and pamphlets produced over the years which have added so much to the general knowledge of local history in Clinton County. And we hope to publish a new book later this year. C.C.H.A. also maintains and preserves the Valcour lighthouse and secured its National Register acceptance in 1993. Those are just some of the reasons why we value your participation in one of the most active historical societies in New York State.

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VALCOUR ISLAND LIGHTHOUSE

CCHA recently received word that it has been awarded \$1,000 from the Lake Champlain Partnership Program for conservation of the lighthouse during 1994. The Association has also submitted a request for FY 1995/1996 funds through the New York State Environmental Quality Bond Act of 1986.

This year's preservation and maintenance program at the lighthouse is expected to begin soon, thanks to assistance from the Adirondack Builders' Association. Open House at the historic structure is set for Saturday, August 20 (storm date: Sunday, August 21). See the July/August issue of *Notes* for final details.

ORGAN REPLACEMENT (CONTINUED)

Last month we reprinted a 1946 letter from Robert C. Booth, then president of the Plattsburgh Chamber of Commerce, concerning the removal of an electric organ from the chapel at the Plattsburgh Barracks. Several members called to ask, "And what happened then?" Alas, the correspondence reveals only that Mr. Booth continued for some time to try to find the location of the organ which had been taken away by the Army. He was in touch with Mrs. General Russell C. Langdon, a member of the Churchwomen's League For Patriotic Service who referred him to the War Department, but was able to state that the organ had been given by officers stationed at the post. The bronze bell in the belfry was presented by the Navy Department. It had been the ship's bell of the U.S.S. O'Brien, a destroyer that conveyed many troops to Europe during World War I. The chapel was dedicated on October 23, 1933 to the members of the Plattsburgh garrison who served during the First World War (including Mr. Booth).