

# NORTH COUNTRY NOTES

Issued Monthly by the Clinton County Historical Association

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

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## **MAY PROGRAM: THE LAND OF MAKEBELIEVE**

“Arto Monaco: The Land of Makebelieve,” part of WCFE-TV’s series, “People Near Here,” will highlight the Association’s May program. Derek Muirden, producer/writer/host, and Paul Frederick, videographer/editor, will present and discuss their half-hour video about the popular Adirondack attraction.

The program is scheduled for 7:30 PM, Monday, May 6, 1996. Please note the change in location for this program only: WCFE-TV Studios, 1 Sesame Street (off Tom Miller Road), Plattsburgh.

## **EXHIBIT BASED ON CHILDREN'S BOOK TO OPEN SOON**

An exhibit based on “A Great Victory through Johnny’s Eyes: Battle of Plattsburgh, September 11, 1814,” will open at the Clinton County Historical Museum in May. This view of the battle through a child’s eyes, written and illustrated by Jan D. Couture’s 1994-95 fourth grade class at Saranac School, received a special commendation from the 1996 McMasters Committee. The story’s young authors and illustrators are preparing colored versions of their original black-and-white drawings to be exhibited with artifacts from CCHA’s collections.

Call the Museum for additional information on the exhibit. Museum hours are Tuesday through Friday 12:00 to 4:00 PM and Saturday 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM.

## **LAKE CITY HISTORIC TOURS**

CCHA, along with the Adirondack Farmers’ Market and the Kent-Delord House, will offer historic tours of the downtown Plattsburgh area via horse-drawn wagons. The ticket price will include a guided tour and admission to the Clinton County Historical Museum and the Kent-Delord House. Special welcoming events are planned by both museums. Tours are scheduled for Saturday, May 18, the opening day of the Adirondack Farmers’ Market, between 9:00 AM and 3:00 PM.

Timed tickets may be obtained from either museum May 14-17 between noon and 3:00 PM or at the Adirondack Farmers’ Market on May 18. Ticket prices are adults \$7.00 and children age 12 and under \$5.00. There is a \$.50 per ticket discount for tickets purchased before May 18.

## WONDERFUL RESULTS OF SCIENCE

[Ed. note: From February, 1850, edition of *Northern Lancet and Gazette of Legal Medicine*, published at Plattsburgh by Horace Nelson, M. D.]

In his last lecture at the high school, Professor Agassiz gave an interesting exhibition of his skill in comparative anatomy. Some bones of a remarkable character were recently dug up in Vermont, in constructing the Rutland & Burlington Railroad. These bones were first examined by Rev. Mr. Thompson, of Burlington, and supposed to be the remains of a whale. They were found ten or twelve feet below the surface of the earth, in what geologists call the most pliocene strata—that is, the portion of the earth's crust which has been recently deposited. After devoting three days to the examination of these bones, Prof. Agassiz conclusively proved them to be the bones of a species of whale nearly allied to the black fish. The living animal must have been twelve or fifteen feet in length. The whole process of restoring the animal from the bones which were put into the hands of the Professor was carefully and minutely explained to the school. To one who has given no attention to the subject of comparative anatomy, it may seem impossible that from a few bones, or in some cases, from a single bone, entire animals may be restored. Strange as it may seem, it has often been done, and with a degree of accuracy that excites surprise. The fact that it can be done only shows the fixed and invariable character of the Creator's laws. We present to our readers two remarkable instances of Prof. Agassiz' success in this department of scientific effort. At the meeting of the British Association for the advancement of science at Dublin, in 1835, after the Professor had entertained the association with an account of his labors, he was asked if he could tell what forms would be found in any strata, though he had seen no species from that strata. He replied that he thought he could. He was then asked what sort of fish would be found in the new red sandstone and carboniferous beds. He had never seen any specimens from those beds, but from the knowledge he possessed respecting forms which were found in other strata, he went to the blackboard and delineated the forms of those species which he supposed would be found in the above named beds. No sooner had he done this than Captain Portlock brought forward some fine fossil specimens from these identical strata. When compared with the figures which the Professor had drawn, the coincidence was found to be complete. This exhibition of skill and talent called forth from the most learned and scientific body in Europe the greatest applause and admiration. The problem was one of the most difficult that could have been presented—the solution was as perfect as the problem was difficult.

Some years ago, some single scales of a new species of fossil fish fell into the hand of Professor Agassiz. No individual of the species had ever been seen. From those scales the Professor proceeded to restore the fish—he drew out in full the form of the fish from the

scales, as he thought it would be found to be should the fish itself ever be discovered. Two years after the whole fish was actually found. When compared with the drawing, the drawing was found to be an accurate representation of the fish.—These may sound to some like “fish stories,” *but they are true*. These things were not done in secret. We have seen the drawing and the fossil, and should be very thankful if we could make as accurate a drawing with the fossil before us. To those who may ridicule or disbelieve what we have stated, we would say in the triumphant language of the Professor, “*come and see*”—get rid of the testimony of your own eyes if you can.—*Cambridge Chronicle*.

## **McMASTERS PRIZE AWARDED**

At CCHA’s April meeting, the Emily McMasters Prize for the Writing of History was awarded to Tim Myers of Plattsburgh. His essay, “Plattsburgh: A History of Voices,” encourages readers to listen to the voices of the past—from Native Americans to white explorers, settlers, soldiers, and sailors. Myers also hears the voices of ordinary people of all backgrounds—the people who made Plattsburgh a community—telling of the joys and sorrows of everyday life.

## **ALTONA FLAT ROCK SUBJECT OF BOOK**

*A History of the Altona Flat Rock* by Larry Gooley is now available in the Association’s Museum Shop. Gooley’s book, illustrated with historic photographs, describes the natural history and physical features of the Flat Rock, traces the history of blueberry growing in Altona, discusses the construction of Flat Rock Dam, and records natural phenomena and local legends relating to this unique area.

Larry Gooley, a resident of Champlain, was the recipient of the 1980 McMasters Prize.

## **SUMMER FESTIVAL**

Preparations continue for CCHA’s summer fund raising event, the third annual Antiques Show & Vintage Car Meet Festival. Event co-chairs, John McKenna and Shirley Koester, have established the following committees to assist with planning and execution: Dealer Recruiting, Showroom Decoration and Dealers’ Room, Food, Advertising, Showroom Organization, Gate, CCHA Booth, and Other Activities. CCHA is seeking one or two persons who will join the 1996 Car Meet organizing team, with the possibility of leading the team in 1997. If you can contribute your expertise in any of these areas, contact the Association office.

This year’s event will be held July 6-7, 1996 at the Old Plattsburgh Air Force Base.

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## PLATTSBURGH CHAUTAUQUA, 1918

[Ed. note: As summer approaches, we present a partial listing of lectures and entertainments offered to the public in 1918 by the Plattsburgh Chautauqua, part of the Redpath Chautauqua System. Chautauqua offered a week-long series of educational and cultural activities for all ages. A 10% War Tax was added to the price of each ticket.]

Music by the Williams-MacNeil Company, "Scotch Singers in Costume."

Lecture, "The Pillar Lifters," by Roscoe Gilmore Stott, billed as "The Poet with a Smile."

Lecture, "The How of Food Conservation," by George L. McNutt, D.P.M., the "Dinner Pail Man."

Play, "The Melting Pot," presented by Grace Mills and nine others.

Music by Boston Opera singers Antony Guarino, tenor; Louise Stallings, soprano; Esther Schultz, contralto; and Allesandro Alberini, baritone; with Marion Carley, pianist.

Illustrated lecture, "Our Feathered Friends," by Ernest Harold Baynes, "Bird Man."

Address, "China Safe for Democracy," by Dr. Ng Poon Chew, the "Chinese Mark Twain."

Comic Opera, "The Mikado," with J.K. Murray and others.

Patriotic Address by U.S. Senator Warren G. Harding of Ohio [who served as President from 1921 until his sudden death in 1923.]

Magic by Frank Ducrot, a "Wonderful Children's Entertainer."

Dramatic Presentation by Katharine Ridgeway, "who has caused more letters to be written to 'Mother' than any two Lyceum folks by reading 'Christmas Morning at Home.'"

Address, "Over There," by Sergeant Norman Knight, 1st Regiment, Gordon Highlanders of Scotland.

Music by the Canadian Drum and Bugle Corps.

Lecture, "Today's Patriotism, or Culture and Kultur," by Dr. Thomas C. Blaisdell.