

NORTH COUNTRY NOTES

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CLINTON COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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Shirley L. Koester, Editor

May 1999

The Next Meeting

will be on May 3, 1999, in the first floor meeting room of the Clinton County Government Center, 137 Margaret Street at 7:30. The program will the first person presentation by Cindy Smith alias Rebecca Barrett. Cindy is a direct descendant of James and Rebecca Barrett. You will hear "Rebecca's" experiences preceding and during the Battle of Concord, April 19, 1775. Interaction with the character is invited.

The 1999 winners of the *McMasters Prize For the Writing of History* will be announced and awards made at this meeting. There are two winners this year. Mary Anne Ducharme of Cape Breton, Nova Scotia's entry, *A Soldier of Isle aux Noix*, brings the history of the events leading up to the defense of our country alive, through the eyes of the common man caught up in the events. J. Kellum Smith Jr. of Saranac, New York's essay is entitled *The Mapping of the Adirondacks*, describing the early history, mapping and settlement of the Adirondacks.

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.

Dr. Hans E. Hirsch

Dr. Hirsch, professor emeritus of history at Plattsburgh State University, died on March 25, 1999. Dr. Hirsch was a valued member of CCHA, serving as vice president, president and chairman of the publications committee of the association.

***Clinton County Historical Association's
6th Annual Antique,
Classic and Exotic Car Show
Held in Conjunction with CVPH***

Sunday, July 11, 1999 – from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
To be held at the CVPH Campus.

Call the museum for information: 518 561-0340,
We need lots of volunteers! Please lend a hand to help your
organization have the best ever car show.

99th Birthday Party

On April 13, 1999, Fanny Barnes celebrated her 99th birthday. Born at the turn of the century, she attended Middlebury College, received her master's degree from the University of Pennsylvania and taught the sciences in Angola, New York and Haddon Heights, New Jersey. She is widely traveled, with an interest in the opera, gardening and birdwatching,. Many residents have fond memories of lunch, good conversation and catching up on the local news at the Donneymede on Rt. 9.

International Museum Day – May 18, 1999

Joining with museums worldwide, Clinton County Historical Museum will be free and open to the public on Tuesday, May 18, from 12 – 4 p.m. This is an annual event in the museum community. This year's theme is "stolen property," and is designed to heighten awareness regarding illegally gained art and artifacts. This event is promoted by the American Association of Museums, to encourage responsible conduct within the field and to encourage museum visitation.

Reminiscences of the War of 1861 – 65

By Col. Frank Palmer
16th U.S. Volunteers

How in the long winter mornings of 1861-62 Corbin & Moore & the writer would squabble and tussle & kick as to who should get up and be present at early morning roll call. How Corbin spent this long winter, mostly on his couch cramming his brain with the contents of Webster's Dictionary Unabridged. In after years reaping the reward of his diligence as a finished scholar and able advocate. How at Antietam, the Rgt. behind us at a slight rise of ground, sufficient to cover the men from direct fire from the front, the men are being hit by bullets seemingly from the sky. We wonder at this and look about for explanation. Soon we see a puff of smoke in the tree tops above the Dunker (Church) just a few rods away. We "catch on" – and in a moment the Rebs up there are slipping and tumbling to the ground with the hiss of our bullets about their ears. How in July of 1862 on our march down the Pannisula the commanders of Rgts. order us to allow nothing to brake through their lines – a covered carriage dashes up to our line & tries to rush through. Col. Seaver stops

the team & says it can't pass "but," says someone within the carriage "Gen'l McClellan is in here." "I don't care a damn!" says Seavor " My orders are positive and I'll obey them." How, at the first battle of Bull Run our men new to their work – the bullets begin to whistle about us. The Capt. of Co. "C" misses his left hand man. The tall 1st (corporal) with three chevrons on his sleeve showing 3 successive terms of service in the Regular army – looking about sees him behind a barn near by – the only man out of position and he, never after until at Gain's Mill, his 6 feet 3 length of remains stretched on the front battle ground, as the Rgt retired from the field – not out of place there, but promoted to a higher place with many comrades.

Yes the writer is loth to stop – it's like being with the old Rgt. over again as the remembrances of those days come turning up – Do you wonder at the garrulousness of the "old vets," of those days – wonder at what they can have to talk about to one another and think that their stories must be old and of't repeated – they are old and of't repeated – but they bring back to us the years of our life we are proud of and we will keep them fresh in our memory.

A member of this institution asked me some time ago to describe the Army going into camp – as he has since, many times, both in those days of 1861-65, and in after days, in service with the Regular Army in our far west. I fear, were he present, he would be sorry he has made the request. No matter, I'll try, and trust to the patience of those present to be with me. Well, we will take a scene a summer scene & a winter scene – After Pope's defeat at Manassis, the Army, again under McClellan, takes up it's march from Alexandria Va. About sunset of a day early in Sept 1862 – a Saturday evening. We move across the bridge to W. and through it's silent streets at midnight. All the citizens in deep slumber. As if knowing the army of the Potomac was their guardians and that naught of harm would come to them from the armed forces of the enemy across the river. At only one house do we see lights & people. It is the home of our Commander and he & his family & aids are standing on the doorsteps as we march

bye. He is silently & critically reviewing the army with which he is to prevent Lee from gaining a foot-hold in Maryland – as we move past the house the flags wave the Officers salute and the men cheer. They have got their old commander back again and are glad. There is no question, the feeling in the Army as a whole, is for McClellan – the men loved him – asked “Why?” Well he took such good care of us was the reply. If one has a keen instrument of officer as an army & defense, it is well to keep it in perfect order, ready at all times to perform the work it was made for: it is equally well and imperative to do that work with it’s whole strength & might, promptly and thoroughly. Trusting greatly to the high skill of the instrument you have fashioned.

Yes, the men loved McClellan, and one can easily think how gratifying it must have been to him, this expression of their love, in the shadow of our Capital this dark midnight hour, when no extraneous matter could have anything to do with this voluntary expression of affection. In his mind from that hour we ought to have been fitted to do more thorough work on the coming battlefield of the south mountains of Antietam. Well – moving out of the City to the North & west early dawn finds us in an open, rolling country. ____ of Brigades file to the right and left into the fields. Colum by Colum the batteries wind their way to the Commanding positions on the field. The Cavelry takes up positions on the front & flank outskirts them. Quietly & quickly all sink to rest in the dreamless and healthful slumber that the life in the open air and the fatigues of the night march have incurred us.

When we awaken the bright sun has climbed to the zenith. The sweet sounds of the bugles come from the camp of the artillery and cavelry. The melody sounding here and there and all about us until the air is filled with sweet sounds. And the lovely sabbath day is heralded to us as of peace & rest – we get our breakfast & dinner in one, and then later in the day after a smoke & chat, we gather about our Chapplains to hear what they can have to tell us. And much they have to tell us of fighting and battling, but of an other kind than our present mission calls us to,

but not less glorious. They say (of a) much greater reward. I well remember the religious services of this day. ___ on the soft green turf of a hill side in the midst of the 5th Maine Rgt, (the 16th chaplain had gone home sick from the malaria of the Penisu. Campaign) The Rgt our Rgt loved & trusted. I listened to the words of counsel of love and of promise it's venerable Chaplain Mr. Adams found in his heart to say to us. The day was so quiet and lovely. The outlook of mass upon mass, Rgts. upon Rgts assembled in like devotions all about us. The deep and sobering words of the speaker all so _____ true, that involuntarily I picked up a little pebble and put it into my wallit as in memory of the occasion, a childish action, hardly worth recording. Yet it's memory has come back to me many times in the 37 years past, and has brought with it the little hillside upon which we sat. The circle of strong men about - with serious earnest faces, indications of the work they had set themselves to do - the white haired chaplain, with words full of encouragement and promise.

Going into camp at evening it is a day in the Nov. aft the battle of Antietam, we moved across the Potomac into VA again this morning and are marching down the broad turnpike road heading south to the southern Capitol. Richmond. The goal we had so often tried to reach. The air is crisp and wholesome this bright Nov. day - we have had a long rest of (weeks) after our late battlefield and am glad of the change to action once more.

Our army lyes on the east side of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Lee's army is on the west side, only a few miles away, marching in parallel lines with us and abreast of us the cavelry of each army skirts the base of the mountains. We find our right of way. The men step out blithly and briskly. We fill the broad road from side to side and as far as the eye can reach from front to rear the glitter of the bayonets and gun bands and of th eagles on our standards, sparkle in the sunlight. We halt an hour at noon and then on again, over valley and hill. Through woods and through broad fields - past stately mansions around

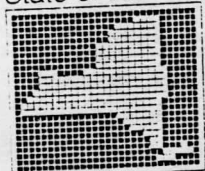
fine estates, now mostly deserted with no audiences to our pageantry except here and there a person of dark hue standing by the roadside but we are not over anxious for an audience for down here in Va on our quest, such an audience is apt to bring contention and after our long rest, we are peacefully inclined today, and would enjoy to the full the stretching of our legs in the brisk and clean air, and the anticipatory evening encampment, with our haversack full of good things to be then disposed of and our evening meal as the afternoon wanes and the sun nears the western horizon the long line of blue and sparkle puts on a different appearance in our mind as with the bayonet and each other object appears they take the form of fence rails and boards the highway seems full of these and the very boundary of the adjacent fields seem to join in the line of march. The men know that soon we go into camp.

These reminiscences of Col. Frank Palmer, are printed here in their original form.

Museum Shop

Museum Shop Hours are: 12 – 4 p.m. Tues. through Friday, and
1 – 4 p.m. Sat. List of available titles sent upon request.

State of the Arts



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