

NORTH COUNTRY NOTES

ISSUED BY THE

CLINTON COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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Shirley L. Koester, Editor

May 2000

The Next Meeting

will be May 1, 2000 in the first floor meeting room at the Government Center, 137 Margaret Street, Plattsburgh, at 7:30 . Stan Ransom, *The Connecticut Peddler*, will present a program on "*Researching Adirondack and North Country Folk Music.*" Ransom, a folk singer and folklorist, has recorded six albums of the traditional music of New York State. He has recently been recording albums of hammered dulcimer music and songs and tunes of 1814, at the time of the Battle of Plattsburgh. He will discuss the searches and successes he has had in the area of North Country folk music.

Summer Event

Save this date – JULY 9, 2000! The Clinton County Historical Association will once again partner with The Champlain Valley Physicians Hospital Foundation to present "The Seventh Annual Antiques and Vintage Car Show." This event will be held on the lawns of the hospital campus. Watch for announcements of added attractions. On July 8, there will be a pre-show reception at Hawkins Hall, for patrons and guests, and those early birds who want first jump at the treasures to be offered by our dealers. Please call the museum at: 518 561-0340 for more information and reservations. A road rally on July 8, dubbed "The Lozier 500", is being organized by "Indianapolis" aficionado, Dr. Tony Vaccaro, scheduled for Saturday Call CVPH at: 561-0881 for information and registration for this event. A special exhibit at the museum, of Lozier memorabilia and a launch motor is planned for the weekend.

"D. & H. 'Bulletin' Carries Story, 'On, The Old Chateaugay' Featuring H.B. Raymond, City, Now Retired"

Nowhere on earth was railroading ever a more exciting adventure than on the Chateaugay Railroad before its three-foot six-inch gauge was standardized in 1903," says Henry B. Raymond, retired Fuel Foreman at Plattsburgh. The steepest grade, reaching a maximum of 3 per cent and some of the sharpest curves on the Delaware and Hudson system are to be found even now on this 23 mile line starting on Lake Champlain at Plattsburgh, crossing the lofty Adirondacks, and terminating at Lake Placid.

Scarcely a day passed when the Chateaugay crews did not meet with some thrilling experience such as trying to stop a runaway car or train, of timber or iron ore. A hazard at any time, a runaway was doubly dangerous on that old narrow gauge track. Furthermore when Plattsburgh had a snow flurry, there was a heavy storm on the Chateaugay; when Lake Champlain was blotted out by swirling flakes, the Adirondacks were gripped by an icy blizzard.

The most exciting ride in Mr. Raymond's experience came one day while he was conductor on a 13 car train of pig iron descending the steep, ten mile grade at Dannemora. They were traveling at a fairly rapid pace when it was realized that the hand brakes would not hold - this was before the day of air brakes. Quickly the train gained momentum until traveling at a mile-a-minute speed, a car of ore left the track at Gougeville Crossing. They were going so fast that it was hurled clear of the track and the train, the link and pin couplers letting go. The cars behind closed the gap with a terrific impact and their mad race continued.

At Cadyville the balance of the train, unable to hold the rails any longer, was derailed. The cars went to one side of the right of way and were completely demolished. Engine 540, with its crew, a trainman, and Conductor Raymond aboard went off on the other side, turned at right angles to the track, and buried its nose completely in the soft sand bank. The black, sticky fuel oil

from the tender oozed out over the otherwise uninjured crew before they could struggle free from the wreckage.

Mr. Raymond's early life was spent near his birthplace at Clintonville, Clinton County, about sixteen miles from Plattsburgh. His father was an ironmaker by trade. Iron ore was smelted in charcoal fires into what were known as "loops," 300 pound "doughnuts" of iron, which were later worked into commercial sizes under heavy triphammers. After completing his "common" school education, Henry went to work in the iron rolling mill at Saranac, N.Y. Here the "Loops" were heated, and rolled into merchant bar iron for use in plants manufacturing sled runners, wagon tires, and similar items. Other metal was put through the rollers, driven by a giant water wheel, to be worked down to pieces four feet long by one inch square. It was then shipped to Plattsburgh where it was made into horseshoe nails. He was soon promoted to a job paying the then unheard of wages of \$2.50 a day.

In an interview, Mr. Henry tells of harrowing adventures to do with the dangers of transporting the iron via rail. This article was submitted by Addie L. Shields, Clinton County Historian.

**"Nothing New Under The Sun"
Exhibit Opens: May 6, 2000 at 1:00**

Although Easter did not revive the fashion of yesteryear, nor bring about a resurgence of interest in this crowning accessory to our dress, which in past eras completed ensembles, The New York Times recently featured a full page advertisement of this year's styles, which mirror some of the vintage hats in our collection.

A retrospective exhibit of some of the best examples will be on display in the museum. This exhibit will open Saturday, May 6. Put on your best "bib and tucker" (if you have either) and come to the opening of this show. Refreshments will be served.

SHOP

"Captain Thomas Macdonough: Delaware Born Hero of the Battle of Lake Champlain" by Virginia Mason Burdick. Price \$10.95 plus .77 TX and \$3.50 shipping and handling. Sorry! This book is in limited supply, so we cannot offer a discount.

Crimes in the 1800's or early 1900's

Information sought by Penelope D. Clute, District Attorney, Clinton County about capital cases in the county. Log onto her website at: www.daclute.com to find out about the Peggy Facto case and other interesting cases in and around Clinton County.

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