

NORTH COUNTRY NOTES

ISSUED OCCASIONALLY BY THE

CLINTON COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

No. 5

Allan S. Everest and Charles W. McLellan, Editors

Sept. 1961

Dr. Frank Barnes

of the United States Department of the Interior will be our honored guest at our next meeting, which will be held on Monday evening, Sept. 11, 1961, at 8:00 o'clock, in the Auditorium of the Plattsburgh High School. As Regional Historian for the Northeastern Department of the National Parks Service, he will present to MAYOR JOHN J. TYRELL a Certificate designating Plattsburgh Bay as a *National Historic Landmark*, and will deliver an address on "THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BATTLE OF PLATTSBURGH AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE AREA AS A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK." A special program has been arranged for this 147th Anniversary of the Battle of Plattsburgh, including selections by the Plattsburgh High School Band. The public is cordially invited.

Labor Troubles

From a letter written sixty years ago to Job F. Sherman by S. S. Allen. Submitted by Paul Allen, of Peru.

May 20, 1902

My dear Job:

I was up to the mill this morning, and left with Felio some cards to make reports to me daily of the amount of logs, wood, etc. used and cut up. I enclose one of the cards with this. Last Thursday I asked him to keep account of the number of logs sawed each day, and report to me. He did so for two days. The first day the people in the mill did not know he was keeping count and they cut 97 logs. The second day they knew of the tally and cut 157. The third day they destroyed his tally. This was done by Weaver and Lay-
hee who works in the heading room.

I gave those fellows Aleck this morning and told them that I would turn them off if anything of the kind occurred again. There are two or three parties up there who think they know more about the mill

than we do, and if we are unable to get reports of what is going on, the sooner these parties leave the better. I imagine, however, we will have no further trouble in regard to this.

I asked Wilson this morning to keep the time of the men who are working in the heading room and told Annis that he would not have to look after them any further. That will give him time to look after his own end of the mill. He knows of course that he will have to file as before. I think he felt a little bit hurt but guess he will get over it.

I will call you up over the telephone to-night about eight o'clock. For the last few days I have been unable to get you, as the wire does not seem to work right.

Very truly yours,
S. S. Allen

The Editors

welcome material for inclusion in these North Country Notes. Many interesting historical items remain buried in family records, letters, and scrapbooks. Let others enjoy them, too.

Major Wool's Account of the Battle of Plattsburgh

John E. Wool (1784-1869) was a major in the regular army at the battle of Plattsburgh. A long military career included the office of Inspector General in 1821 and important service in the Mexican War and the early Civil War. He was retired in 1862 with the rank of major general. Excerpts are here given from his letter to Benson J. Lossing, noted historian of the War of 1812, from the original loaned by Dr. Warder H. Cadbury, Research Director of The Adirondack Museum, Blue Mountain Lake, N. Y. Major Wool's eye-witness account challenges some of the long-held ideas concerning this battle and its leaders.

Troy, N. Y., May 10, 1860

My dear Lossing,

Agreeably to your request I herewith send my remarks on Mr Dawson's battle of Plattsburgh.*

In his account he says that "the enemy on the 5th [of September] continued his march, in the course of which he met serious obstructions from the trees which had been felled in the roads and from the removal of the bridges on his route — a duty which had been efficiently performed by General Mooers of the New York Militia, seven hundred strong." General Mooers, on the 4th, as it appears from General Macomb's report, "collected about 700 Militia and advanced seven miles on the Beekmantown road to watch the motions of the enemy, and to skirmish with him as he advanced, also to obstruct the roads with fallen trees and to break up the bridges." It is due to truth to say that the General nor his Militia felled trees in the roads, removed bridges or skirmished with the enemy previous to, or on the morning of, the 6th, when the enemy took possession of the village of Plattsburgh.

On the 5th General Mooers with his Militia was encamped on the Beekmantown road, four or five miles from Plattsburgh. Majors Appling and Sproul were ordered on the direct road to Chazy with directions to obstruct the enemy's advance on this road. This service was performed by them on that, and on no other road was a similar duty performed. Up to the 5th not a shot had been fired at the enemy. It was this circumstance which induced me to call on General Macomb, when I remarked I thought we ought not permit the enemy to reach Plattsburgh without some evidence of a determination to resist him and to defend our position; and requested permission to go out on the evening of the 5th with the troops under my command, the 29th Regiment, when I would reach the enemy's camp before morning, beat up his quarters and perhaps take from him some prisoners from whom the General might learn the state of their forces. This he objected to saying I might be captured and he had no men to lose. About sundown however he directed me to go out with two hundred and fifty infantry, and at the same time said Captain Leonard with his Artillery will go with you — the Captain was present and heard what the General said. I started at about 12 o'clock. Captain Leonard refused to march with me, because, as he said, the remarks of the General he did not consider an order.

I halted at the camp of General Mooers when I learned the enemy was encamped at the junction of the two roads leading to Chazy, about four or five miles from the General's camp and nine miles from Plattsburgh. I recommenced my march and at daylight I met the advance of the enemy at Howes, seven or eight miles from Plattsburgh, and from this point I disputed every inch of ground. I received no assistance or aid from General Mooers' Militia save about thirty men who volunteered to join my command and remained with it until my arrival at Plattsburgh. It is however due Mooers to say that he endeavored to bring his troops into action but did not succeed. They fled without firing a gun, and did not stop until they crossed at or near Pike's Cantonment, except a small party, which defended the upper bridge. These I am

*HENRY B. DAWSON, *Battles of the United States by Sea and Land* (1858)

under the impression, were the twenty-five young men of the village who formed themselves into an independent Volunteer corps for the occasion.

During the siege, from the 6th to the 10th, nothing of importance transpired except that the enemy established their several batteries preparatory to the attack on the 11th, and the gallant service performed by Captain McGlassin, who with fifty men surprised three hundred men and drove them from the construction of a mortar battery a short distance from Fort Moreau. Although sick in bed McGlassin volunteered to perform this gallant act.

On the 11th on the approach of the British Fleet to attack McDonough, the troops on land opened their batteries upon the works of General Macomb, but without much effect. Their fire was briskly and efficiently returned from Forts Moreau, Brown and the blockhouses. The enemy formed in two columns preparatory to an assault intended as soon as the anticipated victory obtained over the fleet of McDonough. One column moved near the bridge in the center of the village to be in readiness to cross, and the other crossed the ford at Pike's Cantonment without resistance from the Militia, who retired as the column advanced, the head of which halted within a short distance of the rear of our works and remained there until the engagement of the two fleets was decided.

This being in favor of the Americans, Prevost recalled his columns of assault and immediately commenced preparations for retreating to Canada. The column in rear of the American works recrossed the Saranac without interruption, excepting the company in advance which not receiving the order to fall back and after waiting some time for the main column, went back to learn the cause of the delay, when they came in contact with General Strong's Vermont Militia, who killed and took prisoners the greater part of the company. Thus ended the battle of Plattsburgh, excepting on the retreat of the enemy some of the Militia followed and picked up as prisoners 250 or 300 deserters.

In conclusion I have only to remark that much of General Macomb's report of what took place during the siege, and on the 11th, for instance the resistance and repulse of the attacking columns, is considered by those who were present apocryphal.

I am truly

Your friend

John E. Wool

FALL AND WINTER PROGRAM

1961-1962

- OCTOBER 17 - *Local History Workshop*
3:30 to 5:30 and 7:30 to 9:30 o'clock
Dr. Albert B. Corey, State Historian
- NOVEMBER 6 - "*Clinton County in the Civil War*"
Rev. John F. Boyle, S.J.
- JANUARY 8 - "*Game Birds and Animals of the North Country*"
Edward E. Gardephe
- FEBRUARY 5 - "*Presidential Visits to Plattsburgh*"
Dr. Leonard T. Kreisman

Cattle Marks

*Extracted from the records of the town clerk
of the town of Plattsburgh.*

Charles Platt Esqur his marke is crop
of the End of the left Ear Mar 5th 1788

Abraham Allen mark. A swallow fork
in the end of each Ear 25th May 1792

Anson Waterman a Square Crop off of
the right Ear and three nicks in the end
of the Same, and a hole thro' the left
Ear is his mark—September 1st 1802
Transferred to Henry H. Butler 1813

Ebenezer Allen Ear Mark, a Swallow
fork in the end of each Ear June 11 1814

William Bailey's Mark is a Slit in the
Left Ear. June 10th 1815

John T. Addom's mark is a half crop
off each Ear June 9th 1817

Roswell Barbers mark is a Slanting crop
on the left ear & Two halfpenny's on the
underside of the right ear. April 17 1818

John Brown's his mark is a round hole
through each Ear March 20, 1819

Alvah B. Balch Takes Ebenezer Allen
mark. April 11th 1822

Our Latest Publication

We are pleased to announce the publica-
tion of the *History of Cumberland Head*,
written by Mrs. Bess Hagar Langworthy.
It is comprehensive in its scope, from the
first settlers on "the Head" through the
exciting days of the Battle of Plattsburgh,
and is a valuable contribution to the his-
tory of our North Country. Copies will
be distributed to members at our Septem-
ber and subsequent meetings.

An Acknowledgement

For many years Mr. Frank Dossert has
donated the plates, his addressograph and
his energies to the work of addressing all
the notices and publications emanating
from the Historical Association. For this
he has long ago earned the profound
gratitude of officers and members of the
society. Mr. Dossert has just added to
his previous generosity by presenting the
machine and all the plates to the Asso-
ciation for its permanent use.

#5 SEP '61

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Allan S. Everest, Co-editor

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