

NORTH COUNTRY NOTES

ISSUED MONTHLY EXCEPT SUMMER BY THE

CLINTON COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

No. 64

Allan S. Everest and Charles W. McLellan, Editors

April 1970

The April Meeting

April 6, 1970 -- The meeting will be held in the auditorium of the Plattsburgh Public Library at 8:00 P. M.

The subject of the evening will be "Elkanah Watson" by Mr. Stuart D. Ludlum. Mr. Ludlum needs no introduction to our Association, as we all remember his inspiring talk to us in February, 1968. He is now also editor of "Adirondack Life," the quarterly magazine which broke into print early this winter.

For our May meeting, we will have the privilege of hearing Mr. Coy L. Ludwig, Director of the Remington Art Memorial Museum at Ogdensburg. The topic: "Frederic Remington and His Art."

The public, as always, is cordially invited to attend all meetings of the Association.

MONEY — MONEY — MONEY

Have you paid your dues to the Historical Association? If it has slipped your mind, this is a gentle reminder that even a non-profit association such as ours does have expenses. The annual dues are, for the present, as follows:

Student	\$ 1.00
Adult	\$ 2.00
Family	\$ 5.00
Contributing	\$10.00
Patron	\$25.00 (or more)

and may be sent to Mr. John A. Caramia, 75 Court St., Plattsburgh, N. Y. 12901. And while you are at it, why not include a membership or so for former Clinton Countyites? An ideal gift or remembrance!

FROM THE DIARY OF JUDGE PLINY MOORE

At Champlain, N. Y.

- Nov. 22, 1812. Gen. Dearborn & Army marched for southward.
- Dec. 4, 1812. 27 Soldiers buried to this day.
- Apr. 6, 1813. Federalism triumphant in all Town offices.
- June 3, 1813. Battle of Lieut. Sidney Smith and loss of 2 armed sloops.
- Jul. 31, 1813. British at Plattsburgh.
- Aug. 3, 1813. Block Houses burnt by the British.
- Aug. 7, 1813. British Squadron sail'd up the Lake.
- Sept. 20, 1813. The Army passed into Odletown Battle.
- Sept. 21, 1813. Counter Marched.
- Oct. 28, 1813. 300 British here commanded by Maj. Perrault.
- Nov. 2, 1813. 1000 British came out and rob'd Price & Depeyster and others.
- Nov. 14, 1813. 50 Cavalry arrived. Staid one night and departed.
- Nov. 15, 1813. Army removed from Chazy.
- Nov. 16, 1813. 50 British Soldiers & 3 officers.
- Dec. 4, 1813. Came out 6 British Row Gallies.
- Mar. 4, 1814. Gen. Wilkinson here.
- Mar. 25, 1814. Riflemen & Dragoons arrived.
- Mar. 30, 1814. Gen. Wilkinson's Battle of Lacolle.
- Mar. 31, 1814. Gen. Wilkinson returned to Champlain.

HISTORY OF ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH (1818-1969)

Coopersville, New York

In the writing of this brief account of St. Joseph's Church, the contradictions and errors among the sources, with their own admitted speculations, have forced me to draw some of my own conclusions.

Among the first Catholic settlers of Clinton County were the families of Jean Baptiste LaFramboise and Francois Monty, who arrived from Canada about 1763. They settled on the lake in Chazy. It is said that they were later driven from their farms by the advance of Burgoyne. With them, or shortly after, arrived other French Canadians including Captain Oliver and Captain Jacques Rouse, who settled in Rouses Point in 1793, Pierre Amiot or Ayot, Presque Asselin and Captain Poulin, who settled in Coopersville. Between 1785 and 1790 the real flow of Canadian immigration began. Most of these people were Acadians or young men from Canadian villages south of Montreal who had been sympathetic to the Americans during the Revolution; they were approximately 250 in number. In 1789 the New York legislature granted them land in Clinton County.

These people brought their Catholic religion and French language to their new homes; the earliest of them preceded any English-speaking settlers. To compensate for the lack of a church, these refugees probably gathered in various homes for prayer and hymn singing. One report has the Asselins using an old log school house for the purpose. On rare occasions a few might have sailed down Lake Champlain and the Richelieu to Chambly to attend a real Mass or to receive sacraments. Sometimes a priest would venture south from Fort LaPrairie to administer to the needs of this isolated group of Catholics. Generally speaking, then, there was little formal religion in the lives of these Canadians. They did lay out a cemetery beside the river at Coopersville, and it was named in honor of St. Joseph.

Evidence of the first French church in Clinton County is offered by Hugh McLellan in the Moorsfield Antiquarian. Pliny Moore corresponded in 1790 with the priest Pierre Huet de LaValiniere "near the Rivers Chazy" and from the "Canadian Settlement". According to this evidence, a church was located on Lake Champlain in the town of Chazy. But de LaValiniere's church was apparently burned by some of his parishioners in 1792, after which the priest returned to Montreal. The Pliny Moore letters reflect the hostile attitude between the priest and the settlers.

If this is so, St. Joseph's church at Coopersville was the second Catholic church in the North Country, but the earliest one to endure. About 1818 Father Pierre Mignault arrived from Chambly. He was a missionary who was given charge of all the Canadians in New York. He traveled around the territory, which extended from "the line to Plattsburgh, north and south twenty-five miles, eastward and westward as far as he and his assistants chose to go", and celebrated Mass at Coopersville only two or three times a year in private homes. In 1818 Father Mignault asked the people to assist him in erecting a church. They complied and one was built on the left bank of the Chazy River in Coopersville, then known as Corbeau; it was made entirely from logs. This site was chosen because, of the towns in the parish (Plattsburgh, Chazy, Coopersville, Rouses Point, Sciota, Champlain, Mooers Forks) Coopersville was the most centrally located and had the largest concentration of parishioners. This little log house of worship became the rallying point of Catholicism in the North. A few years later it burned when a stove overheated. A new and bigger one was built on the same site, also of logs. Father Mignault was an ambitious and energetic priest. For fifty years he was concerned with the ecclesiastical welfare of his large parish; he was made a vicar-general by the bishop in New York City.

The first regular and resident priest to come to Corbeau was Father Victor Dugas in 1828. He remained there until his death in 1844 and was buried in the church cemetery. During his pastorate the rebellion in Canada broke out in 1837, and many more Canadians were driven south. At the same time Irish immigrants who were fearful of taking English ships directly to New York City, lest they be marked as traitors, sailed to Montreal and then fled across the border to settle on Lake Champlain. These new Catholics overflowed the church and made it evident that a larger building was needed to accommodate them all.

Father Louis Lopic came from Canada and took over the parish in July of 1844. The next year, under energetic urging, a new church was erected across the road from the log structure. A group of twelve trustees chosen from different parts of the parish supervised its construction. The dimensions were 100' by 50' and it seated about 350 people. It was built from cut stone at a cost of about \$3,000 and contained a bell in the tower. At the time it was the largest church in Champlain. It was

officially given the name of St. Joseph's. It became a central spot for Catholics from as far as Malone to be baptized, married or confirmed.

By 1865 the Cooperville parish had begun to diminish, owing to a decline in population as well as to the fact that other churches were being established in neighboring areas. Plattsburgh became a parish in 1827, Champlain in 1861, Rouses Point in 1869, Mooers Forks in 1880, West Chazy in 1884 and Chazy in 1888.

The church records date back to 1843 and naturally are all in French. They are complete up to the present except for the years 1907-1912. At that time Father Victor Vandenhende went to live in Chazy to take care of the parish as a mission, and took all the records with him. In 1912 Father Walter Larocque, a native, was appointed pastor of St. Joseph's. It was he who built the present rectory; the first had been destroyed by fire in 1899.

In 1913 Father Georges Garand came to St. Joseph's. He had the longest pastorate of any of the priests, lasting until 1937. There were some notable events during his stay. In 1922 extensive alterations were made to the church. In 1930 he purchased the land north of the church for use as a new cemetery. A tragic event during Father Garand's pastorate occurred in 1934 when lightning struck the nearly 100-year-old edifice and completely gutted the inside. Even though it was in the midst of the depression, restoration was begun immediately.

In 1937 Father Garand was transferred to Rouses Point and Father Hermenegilde Brisson took over the pastorate. This priest was devoted to St. Joseph's and attempted to make it a shrine to the Saint. He tried unsuccessfully to erect Stations of the Cross in the new cemetery. He worked extremely hard for donations toward the reconstruction of the church. The cost was proving far too high for a parish of fewer than one hundred families. He publicized the parish in many states to attract tourists and pilgrims, and donations came in from near and far.

St. Joseph's has been redecorated in the past few years. During the alterations done under Father Kellogg, the plastered walls put up after the 1934 fire were finally painted. In 1966 the church received a gift of 680 carillons, which are played daily and call the people to worship on Sundays. At the present time the church is again getting a new face-lifting under the direction of Father LaDue.

Judith Stay, SUC

THE ADAMS (KNAPEN) CEMETERY—BEEKMANTOWN

This cemetery no longer exists. It was a small enclosed cemetery, on Route 9 near the southern line of the town, on the west side of the road, about three miles north of Plattsburgh. Almost completely copied in June 1931. A return visit a few months later found every stone gone, broken off at the ground. It may be located on Beer's 1869 Atlas, on Lot 82 of the Beekman Patent.

Eleven stones were copied in 1931, under three surnames: Bowles, Jackson and Knaben.

Bowles: Ann E., died 1852, age 25; George W., died 1856, age 33; John D., died 1857, age 20.

Jackson: Wilson A., died 1877, age 54; Samuel H., son of W. A. & E., died 1861, age 7.

Knaben: Jeremiah H., died 1852, age 79; Olive, his wife, died 1863, age 82; Samuel H., died 1858, age 52; and three children of Samuel H. and his wife Lucy: Jeremiah H., died 1840, age 1; Althea, died 1861, age 17; Mary A., died 1876, age 30.

We were told that many bodies were disinterred prior to 1912, some being reburied in Swanton, Vt. Families formerly buried here included Adam (from Adams Landing, Vt.) and Miller.

DEAD BEATS

In 1877 the "Champlain Journal" devoted a full column, under the above heading, listing by name and amount the people who owed the paper money. The column started by saying: "It is no pleasant task to stir up the skunks who cheat the printer, but duty demands that it be done, that others may not trust the scoundrels and be swindled." About 150 names are listed, with a warning of more to follow. (Memo to the Plattsburgh Press: would you dare publish such a list today?)

THAT OLD CHURCH. WHAT! AGAIN?

The REAL reason for Dr. Everest hiding out in England is now becoming obvious. For here is the third (and different) answer to his "Riddle of the Month" regarding old churches demolished during 1969. This one is from Mr. George R. Copeland, on the Lake Shore Road, who writes:

"You may be interested to learn that still another old church in the county was demolished during 1969. This was the old stone church at Valcour opposite the College Conference Center on Lake Shore Road. This church was built by Robert Platt for his wife, daughter of the President of Yale College. It was originally a Puritan Church and was built about 1810. It was included in property owned by Dan Santa, who had it demolished, in 1969."

The present editor will make certain that there is only ONE correct answer to any "Riddles" he may offer.

RIDDLE OF THE MONTH

Answer to the old riddle was given by Mr. Andrew Broadwell of Rouses Point, who writes: "The first Cattle Show and Fair was held in Champlain on Oct. 14, 1819. Perhaps what happened at the fair might be of interest to readers:

"After a declaration of premiums by Silas Hubbell and a short address, Rev. Mr. Byington opened the exercises with a prayer, and Allen C. Moore addressed the spectators on Agriculture and Manufactures. The officers of the Agricultural Society and musicians, all wearing wheat cockades, then ascended an appropriately decorated car, upwards of thirty feet in height and drawn by 100 yoke of oxen. On the fairgrounds, the oxen were offered for inspection. The half-acre plowing match was won by Henry Ladd of Chazy, who finished in twenty-four minutes and a few seconds. Col. Ezra Thurber of Rouses Point, and vice-president of the Society, was awarded first prize for Best Driving."

New Riddle: Who was in command of the American forces on this northern frontier at the time of Murray's Raid on Plattsburgh?

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Issued by the

CLINTON COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

David K. Martin, Secretary
West Chazy, New York

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