

NORTH COUNTRY NOTES

ISSUED MONTHLY EXCEPT SUMMER BY THE
CLINTON COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

No. 99

Allan S. Everest and Charles W. McLellan

January, 1974

The January Meeting

On Monday evening, January 7, 1974 at 8 o'clock in the auditorium of the Plattsburgh Public Library, the Association will hold a brief annual meeting. Election of new officers will be conducted and annual reports submitted.

The program of the evening includes a slide presentation by Mr. Herbert McCoy of the audio-visual staff at the College. He will show carefully photographed pictures of the antiques at the Alice T. Miner Museum in Chazy.

The public is cordially invited.

NOMINATIONS FOR 1974

The following slate of officers for the Association for 1974 will be submitted by the Nominating Committee at the annual meeting on January 7th. Additional nominations may be made from the floor at that time.

President — David Martin, West Chazy

Vice President — C. Randall Beach, Altona

Secretary — William Stanford, Chazy

Treasurer — Ruth Hecht, Plattsburgh

Curator — Ruth Hecht, Plattsburgh

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

Owing to an oversight on the part of the editors, the name of the author was omitted from the article "The Quaker Meeting Houses in Old Peru" in the December issue of the "Notes." It was researched and written by Sam Orne, a senior at the State University at Plattsburgh.

FROM THE NEWSLETTER OF THE 3 R'S

The October 1973 NEWSLETTER of the North Country Reference and Research Resources Council (the interlibrary loan network in this area which serves your local library through the County Library System) records two items of historical interest:

1. Does anyone own a copy of FORTUNE'S WHEEL by Martha Gray? (Abbey Press, 1901). This is an autobiographical narrative of life in northern New York. It is not listed in the NORTHERN NEW YORK HISTORICAL MATERIALS and the only known library copy is at the Library of Congress. If anyone can locate a copy, please contact the Council Office, 73 Park Street, Canton, N. Y. 13617.

The Journal of Benjamin Mooers

(The first five letters are directed to major General Benjamin Mooers of Plattsburgh, commander of the militia of northeastern New York, from Generals Bloomfield and Dearborn and Colonel Pike. The object is to neutralize the Indians near the Canadian border so they will not join the British side during the war. From the Bailey Collection at Burnt Hills, New York.)

1. General Joseph Bloomfield to General Mooers, Plattsburgh, October 13, 1812

Genl Mooers will be pleased to supply Genl Louis of the St. Regis Tribe with the customary clothing in the Bills to be paid by the Assistant Deputy Quarter Master.

2. General Henry Dearborn to General Mooers, Plattsburgh, November 26, 1812

You will please take charge of the St. Regis and Caughnawaga Indians at this place & have them furnished with such articles as your Judgment shall dictate as proper & expedient, under their present circumstances. For the trouble and expense you may be subjected to you will be reasonably compensated.

P.S. Sir, it is intended by the above that you should have the care of all such Indians as may be within the United States or on the border of Canada between the river St. Lawrence and Lake Champlain and you are hereby authorized to draw such provisions from the Contractors as may be necessary for the Indians under your care.

2d Postscript. Sir, you will please to supply such Indians as will make snow shoes from time to time with such quantities of green Hides as may be necessary to give them and you will call on the A. D. Q. Master for money to pay the Indians for the snow shoes they may make, who is hereby requested to advance the money for said purpose.

3. Col. Zebulon Pike to Mooers, Camp on the Saranac, December 14, 1812.

On your representation that the means will be an advantageous one, you are authorized to employ Joseph Lee or such other person as your agent at the French Mills with the St. Regis Indians as well to superintend the issue of their provisions as the manufacturing a number of pairs of snow shoes which have been ordered. For duty you are authorized to allow them twenty Dollars per month as a full compensation. You are also authorized to purchase the materials for said snow shoes, the Bills for which shall be paid on your certificate. You will please to allow Mr. Lee a reasonable compensation for bringing in the Letters from the Chiefs and returning.

4. Dearborn to Mooers, Albany, January 14, 1813

Your letter of the 8th Inst. has been duly received. I must confide what now relates to the Indians to your discretion. I know you will do that which is expedient & proper. I think you will find it necessary to send some suitable character to the French Mills to ascertain the number of rations that are issued to Indians and to correct any improper management. You will direct what number to be issued. You will ascertain also what is doing in relation to snow shoes. I hope you will be able to convince Col. Louis that he ought not to come to Albany this winter. Col. Pike will if necessary order the contractors to issue such number of rations to the Indians as you think proper.

5. Dearborn to Mooers, Albany, April 7, 1813

Your letter of the 2d inst. has been received. It will be advisable to continue a small force at the Blockhouse at the French Mills. I therefore request you to direct Capt. Erwin to continue there until the first of June. I will endeavor to have them paid in reason. I will order fifty Rifles with powder and ball to be sent on to Burlington subject to your orders which you will please to deliver in such numbers and to such Individual Indians as you may think prudent but you will please to inform Col. Louis and the other chiefs that they are not on any pretense to commit any act of hostility unless for self defense and that if they or any of them should commit any act of hostility on any of the Inhabitants of Canada except against such as may actually attack them, or our post, I shall be obliged to consider them as unfriendly to the United States, and to withdraw all protection and subsistence from them. If the man you mention, Timothy Brownman, is a sober man and a fair character, I shall feel disposed to give him any aid in my power, in obtaining a more suitable situation. If any member of the Canadian Indians should come over to our side the Lines with professions of friendship you will please to treat them with such attention as you may deem proper; but it may be necessary to have an eye upon them. I wish you would advance to the Caughnawaga Chiefs that came over last autumn, three in number, fifty Dollars each — and your bills on me shall be paid. Young Williams should be with you and observe your directions, and not be absent without your explicit permission. He will want some money and if you will advance him one hundred Dollars and draw on me for it your Draft shall be paid.

(The following two documents concern the role of Eleazer Williams, a Caughnawaga Indian who later claimed to be the lost Dauphin of France, who during the War of 1812 was directed to raise and lead a Secret Corps of Observation, spies who reported British plans and movements to the American military leaders. His memoirs have been published, but not these documents. From the Bailey Collection.)

1. General Dearborn to Eleazer Williams, Greenbush, August 5, 1812

For your services in the way proposed, I will engage to pay you at the rate of four hundred Dollars per year and allow you two rations per day, and for extra expenses in traveling when necessary.

And I will endeavor to afford you the means in the winter seasons for improving your Education. I shall expect the most perfect attention on your part to all directions as you may from time to time receive from me or from such General offices as I may find proper occasionally to place you with. And most ridged punctuality & integrcity will be indispensibly necessary for you to observe as well as the greatest caution and prudence in relative to the business intrusted o your charge. Your account of necessary expenses must be correctly kept and exhibited when required.

2. The United States in account current with Eleazar Williams, viz.

To one year's services from Augt 5th 1812 to Augt 5th 1813, as per engagement with Gen. Dearborn	\$400.00
To rations for the same time, being two rations per day, 730 rations, at 20 cts. per ration	140.00
To Services from Augt 5th 1813 to Augt 24th 1813, 20 days at the rate of 400 Dolls per an.	21.90
To rations for the same time, 40 rations at 20 cts. per ration	8.00
To paid John Wait as per his rect for transporting two Indians chiefs & their baggage from Plattsburgh to Champlain in Nov. last, by verbal order from Gen. Dearborn	6.00
To paid for provisions for the above chiefs at the same time, by verbal order from Gen Dearborn	2.50
To paid for board of two Indian chiefs at Champlain per verbal order from Gen. Dearborn	7.00
	\$ 591.40

I recd of Gen. Dearborn \$100 to defray my travelling expenses, according to his engagement, which I have expended; but cannot furnish a particular statement of the different items on account of having lost a part of my papers, when Plattsburgh was invaded by the British troops.

I was sent twice from Greenbush to St. Regis by Genl Dearborn & the last time stopped at Plattsburgh, the distance going & returning computed at 755 miles.

Eleazer Williams.

1894

New Year's in Plattsburgh was notable for the disappearance of calls and cards, and no one was heard to express regrets. Spring was ushered in with hand organs, boys with marbles, and new maple sugar. Summer brought the usual lake excursions, Ringling Brothers' circus and James Corbett, the new world boxing champion, in "Gentleman Jack" at the local theatre. Fall brought new reports of a Champlain sea serpent.

Merchants advertised their sales as "A Sure Cure for Hard Times." The depression hit Plattsburgh, but unevenly. The Delaware and Hudson Railroad declared a seven-percent dividend, while extensive new construction was carried on.

This was the year of the Pullman Strike, Coxey's "army," the income tax and a new tarriff, all controversial locally. In New York a constitutional convention was held, one result of which was the permanent upstate control of the legislature. In anticipation of the convention, women agitated for an amendment to allow female suffrage. Susan B. Anthony participated at Plattsburgh and in 56 other counties in mass meetings on the subject, but the convention rejected their efforts.

In his annual report Dr. J. B. Ransom, state physician at Clinton Prison, reported 200 prisoners with tuberculosis, which accounted for eighty percent of all deaths there. State-wide, it was second only to acute respiratory diseases as a cause of death. However, diphtheria was being brought under control by a new inoculation.

The education law of this year brought universal, compulsory school attendance one step nearer. A full year was required for children of eight to twelve years; a half year for those who were twelve to fourteen; and the fourteen to sixteen-year group must attend when not "lawfully and legally employed." Exemptions included those in "improper" mental or physical condition. Kindergartens were now authorized, but not required.

Nationally, the calm of this depression year was disturbed by the Venezuelan and the Alaskan boundary disputes, the outbreak of the Cuban revolution and the voiding of the new income tax.

In New York, "Boss" Platt reigned supreme over the state's government. The Republicans proceeded to redistrict the state in accordance with the constitution of the previous year. The Supreme Court voided the practice of local governments of refunding the money that a Civil War draftee paid for a substitute. The new school law, while not providing for free textbooks, forbade changes in texts for five years after their adoption, and also directed that ten weeks of the school year be spent on instruction in the effects of alcohol and narcotics.

In Plattsburgh a collection was started to get a knitting mill to come to town. In the first effort, pledges up to \$500 were made. This method has proved feasible in getting a shirt factory and in providing the land for the extension of the barracks.

The YMCA moved into more adequate rooms on Margaret Street. Runaway horses and speeding bicycles had begun to create a traffic hazard. But by the end of the year serious consideration was being given to an electric street railway.

RIDDLE OF THE MONTH

Old Riddle: The present Clinton County Courthouse was built, and incandescent lights were the first used in Plattsburgh, in 1889.

New Riddle: In its early hey-day, what rate could you expect for a round-trip fare on the D & H to Washington?

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Issued by the

CLINTON COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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