

NORTH COUNTRY NOTES

ISSUED MONTHLY EXCEPT SUMMER BY THE

CLINTON COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

No. 100

Allan S. Everest and Charles W. McLellan

February, 1974

The February Meeting

of the Historical Association will be held on Monday evening, February 4th, at 8 o'clock in the auditorium of the Plattsburgh Public Library. Miss Connie Pope will give an illustrated talk, with pictures, maps and slides, of "Three Ghost Towns in Clinton and Essex Counties." Her presentation results from her sharing in the work of the Archeological Society, which received a grant from the America the Beautiful Fund. The towns she will deal with in Clinton County are Clinton Mills and Woods Falls; in Essex County, Stowerville.

The public is cordially invited to attend.

OFFICERS FOR 1974

The following officers were elected at the Association's annual meeting on January 7th. Addresses are appended for ease of contact.

President — David Martin, West Chazy, N. Y. 12992

Vice President — C. Randall Beach, Altona, N. Y. 12910

Secretary — William Stanford, RD 1, West Chazy, N. Y. 12992

Treasurer — Mrs. Ruth Hecht, 45 Couch St., Plattsburgh, N. Y. 12901

Curator — Mrs. Ruth Hecht

RENEW FOR 1974

It is time to renew membership for 1974. Just toss your check into an envelope, stick it shut and send it to the treasurer, name and address elsewhere in this bulletin. To all who have not joined or rejoined within the last couple of months, please follow up this reminder. But cheers: dues have not gone up in years and do not this time. This is the best bargain in town!

The rates: student \$2, individual adult \$3, family \$5, contributing \$10, patron \$25.

GETTING TO MEETINGS

The present is catching up with the past! Gasoline shortages may pose a problem for members living outside the city who want to attend meetings. Car pools may help. Randy Beach (561-2970) leads the way by offering to pick up people on his route into the city from the west. David Martin (493-3041) follows route 22 from West Chazy. William Stanford (561-2099) comes in on route 9 from Ingraham. Woody McLellan (298-3521) sometimes comes from Champlain. Many others are probably willing to share their cars on meeting nights. See you there!

FROM THE NEWSLETTER OF THE 3 R's

(continued from the January issue)

The St. Lawrence County History Center has published a nine-page guide to the genealogical sources in the Center. Compiled by Van C. Hoyt, the guide lists in some detail the census records, cemetery records, genealogies and histories available to searchers at the center. Items which have indexes are noted. Materials cover St. Lawrence County, but also include material about the surrounding counties and the entire state. Copies of the guide are available for \$.25 from the St. Lawrence County History Center, Box 43, Canton, New York 13617.

A Pioneer Home in Clinton County

There is a book entitled "Pioneer Homes of Clinton County 1790-1820." It was published in 1966 by the Clinton County Historical Association with the assistance of the county of Clinton.

On page 77 of this book is a picture captioned "The Allen Farm on Bedell Road." This same Allen farm was honored by Governor Dewey in 1949 by citation as a Century farm. To qualify in this category a farm must be owned and operated by a continuous succession of descendants of one family. The citation for Allen Homestead farm reads in part as follows:

"Early in 1787, Jabez Allen, a veteran of the Continental Army and kinsman of the famous Ethan Allen, left his home in the Green Mountains of Vermont and bought 62½ acres of land between the Little Ausable and Big Ausable Rivers in Clinton County, New York. Jabez built a log cabin to shelter his wife and children. In a few years he was able to put up a sizable frame house. So well did he thrive that before 1820 he had built his family a substantial, solid frame home which his descendants occupy today. This fact illustrates the energy and intelligence which Jabez Allen had farmed his acres.

"As in the case of many other New York Century Farms, the Allen Acres passed from generation to generation, not by will but by deed."

For me it is interesting to relate some of the enduring handiwork of my forebears that is still in evidence. Besides the original portion of the house there are the original deeds which of course were processed before the house was erected. They are in two parts. They are referred to as "indentures," the first having been made in 1787. When Jabez Allen stayed on the land a full year, he received a second, and final, indenture.

The present Allen Homestead is the third on the premises. The first was a log cabin. The second was a frame house that during the time I was a farmer had been moved to adjoin the cow barn, and it served as a bull pen and a calf pen.

In the cellar of our present home one can see the massive foundation on which a cooking fireplace played such an important part to the living conditions. The cooking fireplace disappeared when the house was extensively remodeled late in the nineteenth century.

Another example of old-time, thorough construction appears in the dug well in the yard. The well is about thirty feet deep and is stoned up without mortar with such thoroughness that not a stone has been displaced since it was built.

Another feature of Allen Homestead can probably be credited to some Allen women-folk. There still exists, more luxuriant and prettier as the years go by, a huge lilac bush that cosily hides the cottage that my father-in-law built across the street from Allen Homestead. In fact, the cottage is on the site once occupied by the frame house that was moved to the dairy barn area.

Stone walls would seem an enduring memory to the toil of forebears but in the case of the Allen farm, the stone walls went into the construction of old Route 9 that goes past our house. In the years of my own farming, I removed the remains of these stone walls and know that the stone walls were rather extensive. It was very evident that the stones were left by a glacier.

There are also stories and names handed down by succeeding generations. The "Swamp Lot" still carries some of the characteristics of its name although there is an extensive ditch now completely surrounding the field. The "rye lot" is now a white pine woodlot. At one time it was mistakenly cleared for crops but proved too sandy for anything but rye. "Dry Mill Creek" flows through part of our land and the name itself tells the story of a mill once constructed on this brook. There is an area on our land once called the rolling bank, and that proved handy for the tree-length white pine logs rolled down it to the Big Ausable River and on to Lake Champlain, where the logs were then formed into rafts to be sailed to Canada for use by the King's Navy for spars and masts.

Ginger and Snuff are two other names that are part of the Allen Farm lore. They were two spirited carriage horses that also doubled for farm work. My father remembered them vividly. Ginger, it seems, had a "big leg." Which leg is was, I never did determine but in spite of the handicap Ginger lived up to her name. In my own farming days, there were George and Tim. They were draft horses that doubled for riding pleasures for Allen children and their friends. The dinner bell mounted on the back of Allen Homestead could be heard a long way when there was no wind. The horses could hear the bell very well, and when it rang for dinner, the horses would prance and be anxious to head for the barn and their noontime feed of hay.

This old house has other interesting features besides the foundation of the cooking fireplace. The two bathrooms were once closets. The windows all had shutters at one time but I, in a practical mood, made them into screens. Our house has a "bay window," a feature

once popular. In my time, I have added the currently popular picture window. This is in our large country kitchen and I remember how impressed I was when we removed the old kitchen window and amidst the framing were numerous needles and pins to tell the story of hours and hours of sewing that had taken place at that kitchen window. The window faced the south, and we still enjoy the winter sun and the view of Trembleau Mountain near Port Kent.

Our house has an artistic newel post, railing, and stairs leading to the second floor. I admired it all the more after an elderly carpenter spontaneously praised the workmanship of the staircase.

In an upstairs bedroom is a small window that is slanted to conform with the roof of the addition to the house. The room is small, and in my father's day the room was hot in summer and cold in winter. It was assigned to the hired man. The story has it that on hot nights it was more tolerable to crawl out the window and sleep on the flat tin roof. Now that same room is insulated and has done duty as a nursery. It is panelled with knotty pine grown on the farm and presently serves as our guest room. When my Mother recently slept at the farm, I inquired the next morning how she fared in the hired man's room.

We have in our house a "sleigh bed." It is large and the springs and mattress are much more modern than the frame itself. The bed is part of a bedroom suite made of virgin pine. For instance, the sides of the bureau are made from a single stock of pine seventeen inches wide. The suite is cream-colored with hand-painted flower decorations (the original paint job). It was a wedding gift to my Grandmother Henrietta Fuller and her husband Isaac Allen.

Another interesting bedroom is the one adjacent to the kitchen. It was known at one time as the "borning" and "dying" room. It was used for all bedridden folks because it was close to the warm kitchen and only supply of hot water. This bedroom was panelled in my time with western fir lumber, which originally was used for the silo that once served the dairy herd.

"Flat Rock" is a choice picnic area located on Allen Homestead. It is bare sandstone on Dry Mill Creek. In early Spring one gets spring fever but there may be a cool wind. Flat Rock is the place to be. In this brook valley one is out of the wind and a warm sun makes the place superb. This has been a picnic area for relatives and neighbors for generations. The rushing spring waters add to the atmosphere. Later in the season the mosquitoes take over and only a few hardy fishermen frequent the area until the warm Fall days when insects have disappeared for another year.

Forestry is an important feature of Allen Homestead premises. White pine grow extremely well in the Ausable River valley. The selective cutting of logs has been part of the revenue of Allen Homestead. There has been tree planting too. There are pine trees in all stages of growth. The largest pine is growing on a boundary line and measures four and a half feet in diameter. It has been safe from the axe and saw because there is not a log in the tree that would make good lumber.

Once there were three wood stoves to heat the house. Now there are two oil furnaces. The attic is well insulated and there are storm doors and windows. However, a cold west wind in the dead of winter lets us know we live in an old house. We can see the curtains move at the west windows and the east end of the house is much warmer than the west end.

Sometimes I like to wonder what future generations might see in evidence of activity of the time I have lived here. Well, there is a pretty pond constructed by my brother Jon and myself about five years ago. That pond should be in evidence for a generation or two. Then there is a Fall-out shelter built by my brother Jon and myself, to every specification of a fall-out shelter. I hope it always remains a sign of our times and never has to be used. It is as damp, dark, and dingy as any dungeon.

There is a cemetery that we have started. This seems to be a reverse trend of the times, to go back to a family cemetery, on your own land, but it is a pleasant location over-looking a portion of the Ausable River valley.

Paul Allen, Peru

A COURSE IN ORAL HISTORY

State University College is offering a non-credit course in Oral History beginning on the evening of February 5th and meeting weekly through March 5th. It will be under the direction of Mrs. Betty Baldwin, who has for the last two years been doing oral history projects for the college on the social, economic and political life of the North Country.

The class will meet weekly from 7 to 9 p.m. in Fine Arts room 204. The cost is \$12. Registration may be completed in advance with the Office of Continuing Education, or on the night of the first class. The course will include interviewing techniques, suitable topics for oral history, and the types and function of various recorders.

THE QUAKER TAX—MILITARY

(Persons exempt by law (Quakers) from personal military service were obliged to pay a special tax. The revenue was used to pay the costs of the local militia inspector and to purchase drums and fifes for the militia brigade. From the Bailey Papers, Burnt Hills, New York.)

Returns of the people called Quakers:

Edward Hallock	\$3	George Irish	\$3
Isaac Hallock	3	Reuben Benedict	3
David Orsborn	3	Sylvester Benedict	3
John Orsborn	3	William Benedict	3
William Keese	3	Peleg Bunker	3
William Keese 2nd or son of		Jirah Smith	3
Richard	3		
William Bowren	3	Samuel West	3
Isaac Underhill	3	John Ricketson	3
Oliver Keese	3	Howlen Ricketson	3
John Keese	3	Augustine Arthur Capt	

May 26th 1807

State of New York / To Benjamin Bragg Collector of the Town of Peru you are Clinton County SS / hereby Required to Collect from the several Persons Above named the sums annexed to their several names and you are hereby authorised in Case any of them shall Refuse or neglect to Pay such sum to Levy the same by distress and Sale of his goods and Chattels together with the Costs and Charges of such distress and sale—and you are hereby required to Pay the amount to Colonel M F Durand on or Before the first day of February next Retaining in your hands five Cents on Every Dollar for your fee for which this shall be your sufficient warrant—Given under our hános & seals at Plattsburgh this 10th day of October 1807

George Perry, Abijah North, Albon Man, Benj. Graves, Gates Hoit,

Supervisors

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February, 1974

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Issued by the

CLINTON COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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