

NORTH COUNTRY NOTES

Issued Monthly By The Clinton County Historical Association

No. 251 President: John L. Myers Editor: Helen W. Allan February, 1989

FEBRUARY PROGRAM

The next meeting of the Historical Association will be held at the Clinton County Government Center, Plattsburgh on Monday, February 6, 1989 at 7:30 p.m. Our speaker that evening is Dr. Charles Alexander, professor of English at Paul Smith's College. Dr. Alexander, well known as editor of the "Screening Room" column in WCPE CH 57's monthly publication Hi-points, has chosen as his topic "The Adirondack Experiences of Upton Sinclair - The Only Safe Places." The program is open to the public.

WAR GAMES IN CLINTON COUNTY

Some CCHA members remember only too well the army maneuvers that took place in this county in August, 1939. To mark the anniversary of that event 50 years ago as war loomed on the horizon, we will present an exhibit at the museum and a program in May. As the member in charge of this project, Joe McGrath is looking for input from participants in the maneuvers and also from residents who remember the influx of men and materiel. We already have access to photographs, newspaper clippings, maps and documents, but Joe would especially like to hear from anyone who has a story to tell and is willing to be taped (a painless process). The program on May 1 will include slides and narration, and we hope that the audience will include some who are willing to share their reminiscences.

Some of the materials in hand include those given by Robert T. Booth from his father's collection. Bob and Helen Booth have also contributed Clinton County insurance maps (1891-1923), posters and other documentary artifacts. Overleaf we reprint a letter encouraging the selection of Clinton County as a site of the 1939 maneuvers.

Anyone who would like to be involved in this project should contact Joe McGrath at 561-3375, or let the CCHA staff know of their interest. Since little has been written about the maneuvers in Clinton County (subsequent events may have overshadowed them), now is the time to do it.

Hon. Charles M. Harrington,
Chairman, Military Affairs Committee,
Plattsburg Chamber of Commerce,
Plattsburg, New York.

Plattsburgh, New York
February 2nd, 1939

Dear Judge Harrington:-

I have learned with a great deal of interest that there is some chance of convincing the War Department that Clinton County is ideal for the holding of the First Army Maneuvres during the coming summer. It seems to me that no effort should be spared on the part of the citizens of Clinton County to bring the maneuvres here.

The holding of this event in the vicinity would be a great inspiration to the men who would participate because of the historic interest in which the community abounds. In my opinion there is no place better situated than Clinton County for army maneuvres because of its historic, military and varied physical features.

It is my understanding that any damage which occurs to property in the way of destruction of crops, etc., will be promptly paid for by the War Department after inspection and assessment by a local board. Consequently, no one whose lands may be used in the maneuvres could have any fear about sustaining a loss.

The occasion would bring many thousands of people to Clinton County and I am confident that the benefits would be widespread and lasting. It is my sincere hope that success will attend the endeavors of those who are working on this matter. If I can be of any assistance, please feel free to command me.

Very sincerely yours,
Benj. F. Feinberg

MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN

CCHA members have set a record this year. We are happy to note that almost 75% of our membership has been renewed by mid-January. This positive response means that we spend less on a second billing and we can proceed with the extensive list of projects scheduled for 1989. If you haven't already renewed your subscription, wouldn't you like to help us make it a perfect 100% score?

MORRISONVILLE MEMORIES

Seventy-two people were present at our January meeting to hear Leo Perry's entertaining slide/lecture on the history of Morrisonville. Mr. Perry is compiling an impressive archive of village photographs and information thanks to the interest shown by his group of researchers and others. He invites anyone who would like to contribute visual materials or little known facts to get in touch with him at his home in Morrisonville.

A GOOD, HEALTHY BREAKFAST

" Opposite to the Roman Catholic chapel (in Duke Street, London) were the lodgings, in early life, of the celebrated Benjamin Franklin. The great philosopher and statesman worked close by, as a journeyman printer, in Great Wyld Street. He himself tells us: 'I worked at first as a pressman, conceiving that I had need of bodily exercise, to which I had been accustomed in America where the printers work alternately as compositors and at the press. I drank nothing but water; the other workmen, to the number of fifty, were great drinkers of beer. I carried, occasionally, a large form of letters in each hand up and down the stairs, while the rest employed both hands to carry one. They were surprised to see by this, and many other examples, that the 'American aquatic', as they used to call me, was stronger than those that drank porter. The beer-boy had sufficient employment during the day in serving that house alone. My example', adds this great man, 'prevailed with several of them to renounce their abominable practice of bread and cheese with beer, and they procured, like me, from a neighbouring house, a good basin of warm gruel, in which was a small slice of butter, with toasted bread and nutmeg, This was a much better breakfast, which did not cost more than a pint of beer, namely, three halfpence, and at the same time preserved the head clearer. Those who continued to gorge themselves with beer often lost their credit with the publican from neglecting to pay their score.'

In 1766, when the great philosopher again visited London to plead the cause of his countrymen at the bar of the House of Commons, he paid a visit to the printing establishment in Great Wyld Street, in which forty years before, he had laboured as a humble journeyman. Walking up to the press which had been his accustomed station, he entered familiarly into conversation with two workmen who were employed at it, and, sending for some liquor to regale them with, related to them the particulars of his career. The press, some years since (Ed: this date is unknown) was purchased by Messrs. Cox, the printers, and sent by some Americans across the Atlantic, to be preserved in Franklin's native city, as a relic of the illustrious philosopher."

Memoirs of the Court of England, (15), Vol. II

YOU HEAR THE ICE TALKING

If you did not purchase a copy of this book written by Shelly Posen for the exhibition on ice traditions at the museum two years ago, you have a treat in store. Filled with irrepressible humor and occasional heart-stopping near-accidents on Lake Champlain, You Hear The Ice Talking is a must for local history buffs. Priced now at \$5.00, it is available at our Museum Shop. Betsy Delord Swetland writes to her grand-daughter Frances in March, 1850 that they'll have ice cream that summer thanks to the ice harvest; tall tales are told of ice boating and speed skating; even taller tales (with plenty of laughter) are related by ice fishermen from one end of the lake to the other, and the art and artists inspired by lake ice are given their rightful consideration. Call 561-0340 to reserve your copy.

PAROLE: QUEBEC; COUNTERSIGN: TICONDEROGA
Second New Jersey Regimental Orderly Book, 1776

This little known book was published by the Associated University Presses for Fairleigh Dickinson University. The editor, Doyen Salsig, is a much-traveled Navy wife who now lives in Arizona. The publisher's notes read as follows:

"This original military orderly book came to light just two hundred years after the Second New Jersey Regiment's orders were recorded in it during the year 1776. It is the record of the part played by the 'Jersey Blues' in the ill-fated campaign for the conquest of Canada, under the flamboyant leadership of Benedict Arnold.

After an abortive attack on Quebec in the dead of winter, in which its commanding general, Richard Montgomery was killed, the Northern Army laid siege to the fortress city from barricades of ice and snow. Arnold assumed command, though severely wounded, and called for reinforcements, still confident he could fulfill the Canadian dream. 'Scotch Willie' Maxwell's New Jersey troops, whose only combat experience had been throwing snowballs at each other in Trenton, were among those sent marching northward across frozen lakes to the walls of Quebec.

The Second New Jersey Regiment was there for the heartbreaking retreat, as the Northern Army, ravaged by smallpox and decimated by deaths and desertions, fell back along the line of lakes to Ticonderoga, where they bound up their wounds. The intrepid Arnold conceived a bold plan for preventing the British fleet from descending the Champlain-Hudson waterway to New York, where Howe had Washington's army sorely pressed. The Battle of Valcour Island was perhaps the finest hour of America's most famous traitor.

A fascinating and well-researched account of the immortal events of the campaign has been interwoven with the laconic Orderly Book entries, providing a chronology and a wealth of illuminating details."

Ed. note: Call CCHA at 561-0340 for how-to-order information. PAROLE: QUEBEC is not yet available in the Museum Shop.

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