

NORTH COUNTRY NOTES

Issued Monthly By The Clinton County Historical Association

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MARCH PROGRAM

A subject of particular interest to North Country residents and travelers on Adirondack highways is the focus of CCHA's March program. Our speaker is Jack Lawliss and his topic is "The History of Policing and the New York State Police." Commander Lawliss retired little more than one year ago with 33 years experience with the New York State Police. He was Troop B commander. Presently he owns and operates a private investigation agency in Plattsburgh. His talk will be a review of the history of policing as a function of modern society, beginning with the Roman Empire. His program includes information about the evolution of law enforcement in the New World and details of the origin of the New York State police force in 1913. The program is full of anecdotal information about operations of police agencies and personal accounts from the three-decade experience of Mr. Lawliss in law enforcement. This program will be held in the community meeting room of the Clinton County Government Center, Plattsburgh at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, March 5. The public is cordially invited to attend.

LOCAL HISTORY PUBLICATIONS

IT'S NO SECRET that another book-length manuscript has flowed from the pen of our most prolific local author, Allan Everest. His latest research has focused on the lives of Pliny Moore and his descendants, many of whom were resident in Champlain. It's a fascinating story of a family whose patriarch was one of Clinton County's earliest settlers. The author has put some myths to rest and presents a factual account of the Moore-Nye-Bartlett-McLellan families and their other connections. Dr. Everest was able to draw on the vast Moore archive at SUNY Plattsburgh and his own personal friendship with Charles (Woody) and Hulda McLellan, late of Champlain. Funding must be sought for publication of the book which is currently being computer-inserted by Wiki Publications. We'll keep you posted on the book's progress.

CRIMINAL NEWS

(from the Plattsburgh-Republican, Apr. 16, 1881)

"The time having expired last Monday within which Mary Welcome had promised to leave town after closing up her brothel in the Welcome Block, she was arrested and brought before Recorder Crowley who committed her to jail in default of bail. While the case was pending, she gave a full list of names of all the men and boys who had patronized her house during the past year in order that the officers might find these parties and give them a chance to bail her, either individually or collectively, but as all Mary's friends failed to respond, she had to go to jail. This list makes very interesting reading and we hope to have it in full for next week. The public have the names of the ladies who figured in the late police reports, and the operations which led up to them, and it is no more than right that they should now have the list of gentlemen whose money and patronage have kept these dens of moral and physical rottenness in full blast among us during the past year."

Ed. note: This crusade against public immorality was located in the files of Special Collections, Feinberg Library, SUNY Plattsburgh. Despite some research, CCHA has not yet determined the exact location of the Welcome Block. Any ideas?

WALKING TOURS

Plattsburgh's peripatetic City Historian, Jim Bailey, is off and running again on a fresh set of walking tours to discover the delights of the city's landscape. So often we think we are familiar with every nook and cranny of our environment, only to discover a building, an alley, a monument we'd either never seen before or forgotten about. Jim's mission is to rediscover our surroundings, and in so doing, increase civic pride in the communities of Clinton County. Due to scheduling difficulties, Notes does not always have details of Jim's next walking tour before it goes to press. But CCHA is happy to relay information by phone, so call us at 561-0340 and we will pass the news.

IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN to mark "Membership Expired" on members' copies of NOTES who have not yet renewed their membership. With the threat of increased mailing costs in the air, we do urge you to send in your check as soon as possible. At a low subscription rate CCHA offers monthly newsletters, an annual magazine, free admission to the museum for members and their families, and 10% discount on local history publications in the Museum Shop. Meanwhile, we're delighted that David Stortz and Mark McCullough are co-chairmen of the membership committee for 1990. Won't you please save them a letter or phone call? Thanks!

MUSEUM ACQUISITIONS

Many thanks to Ruth and Guy Cooper for their gift of Yankee, Yankee, a recently published book written by their husband and father, the late Frank A. Cooper. A well known North Country teacher and historian, Frank Cooper also wrote Mr. Teach Goes To War whose setting is the battle of Plattsburgh, and The Plattsburgh Idea In Education.

We announced last month that Gen. Alexander Macomb's dress sword, presented to him in Detroit by Gov. Lewis Cass on behalf of the State of New York, was given to the museum in January, 1990. A link with Gov. Cass, however tenuous, is the reminder that the Michigan governor's portrait was painted by Abraham G.D. Tuthill to whom our portraits of Levi and Eliza Platt are attributed. Portraits of Mr. & Mrs. Henry Delord in the collection of the Kent-Delord House Museum are also attributed to Tuthill who visited this area around 1820. By 1825 he was in Detroit where he gained a commission to paint Lewis Cass.

Recent acquisitions also include postcards and a book from Harold and Stella Boire of Tampa, Florida; postcards from Dr. Roger Brown of Narragansett, RI; a Mooers hotel register from J.M. Brian; books, photographs and battle of Plattsburgh artifacts from Nancy Barbour whose ancestor Ira A. Wood was one of the youthful "Aiken's Volunteers" in 1814; postcards from Joe McGrath, and a number of pieces from the estate of Mr. & Mrs. Roy Lake, obtained for the museum by Richard Ward, acquisitions chairman.

SOME NOTABLE DATES IN MARCH (IN ADDITION TO JULIUS CAESAR'S)

- Mar.1, 1809 - Peter Saily received his commission as Collector of Customs for the Champlain District from President Henry Adams.
- Mar.3, 1815 - The Village of Plattsburgh was incorporated. First trustees were: Wm. Bailey, Jonathan Griffin, John Palmer, Reuben Walworth, Levi Platt and Samuel Moore.
- Mar.7, 1788 - Clinton County was divided from Washington County.
- Mar.12, 1813 - The Lake Champlain Steamboat Co. was chartered by New York State.
- Mar.18, 1825 - Peggy Facto was hanged at the Arsenal Lot, Broad St., Plattsburgh for the murder of her infant child. Spectators from Grand Isle crossed the lake on ice, but had to return by boat.
- Mar.22, 1843 - At Chazy Landing Benjamin Graves died. He was an early settler in Clinton County after Revolutionary War service as a body servant to Geo. Washington.
- Mar.25, 1785 - Charles Platt finished building his 18'x20' house 2 weeks after his arrival.
- Mar.26, 1909 - Creation of the Nathan Beman Society, Children of the American Revolution.

These dates were culled from Three Centuries In Champlain Valley (no 'the'), published in 1909 by Mrs. George F. Tuttle, Regent, Saranac Chapter of the D.A.R.

A PHILOSOPHER'S VIEW OF THE NORTH COUNTRY

(A letter from Ralph Waldo Emerson to Royal Corbin, Esq., Champlain, N.Y. located in the McLellan Papers, Special Collections, SUNY Plattsburgh.)

'Concord, 15 June, 1867

My dear Sir,

It was very kind of you to send me, now many days ago, four interesting photographs of the Adirondac Country. I refreshed my memories of the Gorge at Keeseville especially, & refreshed also my wish & hope to see the lakes again. The visit to Malone & Champlain, the maps & conversations there seen & enjoyed have revived the old & added new interest in your highlands for me, and I have to thank you particularly for your friendly part.

After my return home I was thrown unexpectedly into a procession of tasks which has put all my correspondence into arrears, & made me so tardy in acknowledging your kindness.

If you come into this region, it will give me pleasure to show you the smallest river & the lowest hills that a Clinton County man can imagine.

With grateful regards.

R. W. Emerson'

Upcoming exhibitions at the museum include a SUNY Plattsburgh centennial display, spotlighting the Normal School classes who graduated from City Hall following the disastrous fire of 1929. Later this year watercolors and architectural drawings by Hugh McLellan of Champlain will be shown with objects from the family's collection.

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