

NORTH COUNTRY NOTES

Issued Monthly by the Clinton County Historical Association

48 Court Street, Plattsburgh NY 12901, 518-561-0340

No. 317 PRESIDENT: Mark A. McCullough EDITOR: Helen W. Allan February 1995

FEBRUARY PROGRAM

CCHA is pleased to announce that this month's program will be given by a member whose credentials in historic preservation are well known in our community. Steven Engelhart, executive director of Adirondack Architectural Heritage (AARCH), will present an informative program provocatively entitled "There's More To Adirondack Architecture Than Great Camps."

Steven points out that there are many buildings and structures throughout our region which represent other building types, architectural styles, and historical themes and influences, including bridges, dams and power houses, railroad stations, cure cottages, inns and hotels, churches, and so on. They reflect how people lived, worked, worshiped and traveled, and they represent the full breadth of individual and community life.

The program will be held on Monday, February 6 at 7:30 p.m. in the first floor meeting room of the Clinton County Government Center in Plattsburgh. The public is invited to attend.

ANTIQUES SHOW & VINTAGE CAR MEET

Planning is already underway for CCHA's second annual summer antiques show/vintage car meet, scheduled on Saturday, July 8 and Sunday, July 9. Show manager Craig Koste says dealer reservations are already coming in and car meet organizer Randy Beach is gearing up for a large gathering of antique cars. The shows will be held on the beautiful campus of Clinton Community College overlooking Lake Champlain. Antiques dealers and vintage car owners should call 561-0340 for registration forms.

*** Watch the March issue of *Notes* for details of our new brown bag lunchtime programs, made possible with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts. It's a brand new series, presented by museum professionals and historians. Details of the six-event series will appear in the March newsletter.

"EARTHQUAKE HITS PLATTSBURGH

TREMORS FELT SATURDAY EVE. IN THIS CITY

Three Distinct Shocks Within One-Half Minute

NO DAMAGE DONE

Entire N.N.Y. Felt Shocks, Which Were Accompanied By Roaring Sound

"Lasting approximately one-half a minute, three distinct earthquake tremors shook Plattsburgh and Northern New York on Saturday evening, scaring and frightening many people, most of whom were unused to having the earth tremble under them. The first shock was the hardest of the three that were felt, (it) came at 9:58 p.m. The first shock was accompanied by a heavy roaring sound, such as is made by a large truck passing in the street, but the vibrations that accompanied it caused dishes to rattle and pictures and other hanging objects to swing to and fro. No damage was done anywhere in the city, as far as could be learned, although many nerves were on edge for some time following the tremors, and earthquakes were the general topics of conversation yesterday.

"Entire Northern New York, as far south as Port Henry, reported feeling the shocks, although the intensity of the tremors varied in most every section. From what could be learned yesterday the section along the border received the heaviest of the shocks. A radio report from a Canadian station Sunday morning stated that no damage had been done by the quake in that section of Canada in which it was felt. It was reported that a house on the Wallace Hill road near Beekmantown was moved two inches off its foundation by the tremors, but that fact could not be ascertained last evening. It was also reported that stock on the shelves of several of the local stores was shaken to the floor during the first tremor. Many people left their houses and did not reenter until the last of the tremblings had stopped. Several people reported feeling a slight shock again yesterday afternoon about three o'clock, but whether this was another slight quake or not, could not be proven.

"The tremors were the first that have visited Plattsburgh since the spring of 1926, when a quake of about the same length and intensity was felt throughout Northern New York. It is believed that the quake originated somewhere in the St. Lawrence Valley, as nearly everyone reported that the quakes were traveling eastward. Immediately following the tremors the Delaware & Hudson officials sent special train crews over the company's tracks from Port Kent to a little below Port Henry, to check on whether rocks had fallen or were in danger of falling onto the tracks. None were found by the special crews, who patrolled the track until daylight."

Plattsburgh Daily Press, April 16, 1934

PLATTSBURGH MILITARY BARRACKS

In 1993 the Air Force appointed a Base Historic Preservation committee to oversee the Base's efforts to preserve its extensive list of National Register structures. Civilian members of the committee were CCHA director Helen Allan, County Historian Jim Ciborski, City of Plattsburgh Historian Jim Bailey, Town of Plattsburgh Historian John Scully and independent historian Dennis Lewis. Much was achieved during the tenure of the committee, now disbanded. Thanks to the efforts of the Air Force administration and the Base architect, Brian Anderson, a major project was achieved. Air Force Legacy funding supported compilation of a historic structures survey of the Old Stone Barracks which will equip our community with a critical tool for use in future preservation of the building and fundraising for its eventual re-use, perhaps as a military museum and interpretive center. In the process of compiling the survey Lozier Architects/Engineers researched the National Archives and uncovered a significant number of documents, maps and drawings relevant to the Plattsburgh Barracks. Now that Air Force funding is no longer available, the responsibility for caring for the Old Stone Barracks will devolve upon the community. The structure is truly a unique building at Plattsburgh, the oldest combat-ready military installation in the United States.

Small world item: For a town of its size, Plattsburgh is better known than most communities, due to the historical presence of all three services since 1814. Recently, CCHA's director stood at a bus stop in San Francisco reading a bus schedule. Out of the crowds a friendly stranger approached and asked if he could help. He did, and in conversation said, "Oh yes, I know Plattsburgh very well. One of my WWII buddies lives there and we keep in touch." This story is not a new one, for Plattsburgh was the destination of many military and civilian personnel, whether to attend the Civilian Military Training Camps prior to WWII, or to be stationed here at the Army Post, the naval Camp Macdonough, the Air Force Base, or to attend Champlain College as WWII returning veterans.

WINTER ROMANCE

"It was in the month of February (1793), while Congress was enacting the laws by which Vermont was to become a member of the Union, that Prince Edward, the fourth son of George the third, then a young man of twenty-four, afterwards Duke of Kent and father of Queen Victoria, passed through the Champlain Valley. He had been in command of a regiment at Quebec and was now on his way to Boston.

"Arriving at Chazy with a large party, he crossed in thirteen carryalls and sleighs on the ice to Grand Isle and thence to Burlington, remaining until the third day. At that time there were but seven frame houses in the town and that of Phineas Loomis (site south-west corner of William Street), a large oak framed two story dwelling house just completed and surrounded by the original forest was the only one at which the Prince and his suite could be entertained.

"At Burlington the teamsters were dismissed to return to Canada and others engaged to take the Prince to Boston. The lady accompanying him, with whom he always conversed in French, started for New York, the two to meet, it was understood, in the West Indies. Before parting the Prince saw that the fur robes were tucked snugly about the traveller while a large dog lay at her feet."

Three Centuries In Champlain Valley, Mrs. George F. Tuttle, Saranac Chapter, D.A.R., 1909

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CLINTON PRISON AT DANNEMORA

CCHA member Carlton Gilroy informs us that the Sesquicentennial Committee of Clinton Correctional Facility is planning summer events to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the facility. Plans call for an Open House on Sunday, July 16, 1995 to kick off the celebration. Also in the planning stage is a permanent display of artifacts and memorabilia relating to the prison. The public is invited to donate or loan objects for the exhibition. Superintendent Daniel Senkowski will be happy to hear from potential lenders or donors, and he can be reached at (518) 492-2441.

For those who do not own a copy of *Clinton Prison At Dannemora*, published by the Historical Association in 1987, the softcover illustrated book is available in the Museum Shop, priced at \$7.95.

WINTERFEST WALKING TOUR

City Historian Jim Bailey has scheduled walking tours on Saturday, February 4 as features of Plattsburgh's Winterfest. Participants in the free tours at 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. will have an opportunity to examine the Bridge Street buildings presently housing Brodie's Auctions and Council on the Arts, Plattsburgh Motor Service, Northeast Printing Company and the old stone warehouse. Jim will also describe the flume under Bridge Street that figures vividly in the city's downtown history. The tours will begin at the Farmers' Market, Durkee Street.

*** Forgot to purchase your copy of *British Naval Activity on Lake Champlain During the War of 1812* by Dennis Lewis? Copies are still available at our Museum Shop and at the Essex County Historical Society/Adirondack Center Museum in Elizabethtown.