

NORTH COUNTRY NOTES

ISSUED BY THE

CLINTON COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

No. 351

David Kendall Martin, Editor

March 1998

The Next Meeting

will be held on Monday, March 2, 1998, at 7:30 p.m. in the first-floor meeting room of the Clinton County Government Center, 137 Margaret Street, Plattsburgh. The topic will be **Coopersville: The Surge and Sway of a Small Place**. Suzanne Moore, author of *The Living Stone: Saint Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, Coopersville, New York*, will discuss the entire spectrum of Coopersville history, utilizing her extensive research, which included study of original documents and interviews with current and former Coopersville residents. Her lecture complements the Clinton County Historical Museum's current exhibition of the same name. This event is made possible with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts and is free and open to the public.

Board Elections

The Clinton County Historical Association at a regular meeting held on February 2, 1998, elected the following members to the Board of Directors for three-year terms ending in the year 2000:

Larry Kudrle
William Laundry
Ron Marino
David Kendall Martin
Cathy Moulton

New Mailing Labels: We have transferred our membership data to a new computer system, which means new mailing labels. Please check your mailing label carefully and advise us of any corrections/changes we should make.

1836 - Saily and Averill constructed a forge on the same river. After its destruction by fire in 1837, they erected a second forge.

1837 - The Rogers Co. began producing iron at Ausable Forks. The manufacture of iron entered a flourishing period in the Ausable Valley.

1841 - The opening of the Caldwell mine at Clayburg on the Saranac River led to the construction of a separator and a 4-fire forge. Peter Tremblay opened the Tremblay mine, situated south of Redford.

1842 - Activity at Dannemora increased when Charles Averill and F. L. C. Saily opened a mine and built a separator.

1845 - Hobart and Hedges erected a 6-fire Catalan forge at Plattsburgh on the north side of the river. It was subsequently owned and improved upon by Christopher Norton in 1873. Norton and his partner, Andrew Williams, also acquired a forge at Russia, NY in 1872.

1863 - The Ausable Horse-Nail Co. was formed at Ausable Forks.

1864 - Peter Tremblay built a forge and separator at Irondale.

1868 - A 4-fire forge was erected by Asa Reynolds at Irona in the Town of Altona. Frank Palmer also built a 5-fire forge at Altona. Ore for both forges was originally brought from Arnold Hill, later from the Chateaugay Ore Bed.

1871 - Shepard Bowen and James Signor bought the Hull, Hopper, and Baker forge at Saranac Lake and made modern improvements in it.

1873 - Andrew Williams and Smith M. Weed founded the Chateaugay Ore and Iron Co. A plank road was built from Russia (near Saranac) to Lyon Mountain.

Léger in Champlain

During World War II, the celebrated Post-Impressionist French artist, Fernand Léger, fled from the Nazi occupation of France to North America. During his exile, he stayed briefly in Champlain with Charles Woodberry and Hulda McLellan. In gratitude, Léger gave them a painting, which they hung in their home. A few years later, Léger again visited the McLellans. When he saw his painting, he exclaimed, "Oh, how nice, you still have my painting, but, you know, you have it hung upside-down."

The Iron Industry In Clinton County

PLATTSBURGH FURNACE IN BLAST

The public are informed that the Furnace of the subscriber, five miles south of the village of Plattsburgh, is now in blast. He has on hand and for sale a general assortment of HOLLOW WARE and STOVES. Also, Gales' patent BARK MILLS. All kinds of machinery cast at shortest notice.

Elisha Clark.

Plattsburgh, July 28, 1813

This advertisement in the *Plattsburgh Republican* refers to one of the earliest furnaces in Clinton County, located near the mouth of the Salmon River. The first Catalan forge at Plattsburgh was built in 1798, while in 1803 William Bailey erected a forge on the Chateaugay River five miles from the Lower Chateaugay Lake. In 1809 Peter Saily made this reference in a letter to the Secretary of the U.S. Treasury : "a furnace is erecting and nearly complete in this area." Saily was probably describing the Sax furnace at the outlet of the Salmon River into Lake Champlain. The date of erection qualifies it as the first blast furnace in the Champlain/Adirondack region.

Some important events in the history of the iron industry of Clinton County are:

1806 - Discovery of the Arnold Ore Bed by Stephen Baker.

1815 - The Keeseville Rolling and Slitting Mill Co. went into business. The company produced nail-plate for the manufacture of horseshoe nails.

1824 - The Peru Iron Co. commenced its operation of forges and rolling mills at Clintonville in the Ausable Valley. Further west the first forge on the Saranac River was built, fed by the Arnold Ore Bed. Later the iron ore used there came from the Peter Tremblay mine at Redford.

1831 - J. & J. Rogers began making iron at Black Brook, hauling ore from Arnold Hill.

1833 - Heman & Cyrus Cady built a forge on the Saranac River.

Early Clinton County Industry

The first industrial effort in Clinton County was the making of potash by burning the timber the early settlers were so eager to get rid of & they cleared away the forest to create fields. The potash could be sold for use in the cloth industry and for the manufacture of glass, soap, and explosives. It was made in large iron kettles about which Peter Sailyly wrote to Pliny Moore of Champlain:

Cumberland head Sept^{ber} . 4-1790

D Sir

it is impossible to part with my potash kettles on no account the season being toshort to worthout my own ashes the remainder of them is about 4000. Bushels I have been disappointed by Cal^v Lyons as well as yourself and went to Albany - sometime in may to purchase apaire of kettles by that reason I begun very very late I am very sorry that it is not in my power to oblige you And amsir with great regard

Your most obe^d h^{ble} servant
P Sailyly

Pliny Moor Esq^f

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