

NORTH COUNTRY NOTES

ISSUED BY THE

CLINTON COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

No. 365

Shirley L. Koester, Editor

Jul 1999

There will be no meetings in either July or August. The next issue of North Country Notes will be published in mid August and be a combined August and September issue.

1998 - 1999

This year has been both very exciting and exacting. We have been busy with school groups, tour groups and tourists, in addition to outreach to local public institutions. Membership stands at 468.....and growing! We welcomed 3 new life members. The association should be proud of its 53 year history.

We gratefully acknowledge those founding members who have been provident and loyal throughout the history of the association. It is through the labor, planning and gifts of artifacts, plus financial help and talents of the members that the mission of the association and museum is assured.

During recent years the association has been gifted with many fine artifacts, which help to illustrate and tell the story of the settlement, business development and lives which have made Clinton County what it is today. Please consider your museum when making disposition of papers (including letters), artifacts and gifts of money. Without the participation and support, both through gifts and financial help, of the citizens of the county, our history will be dissipated and lost forever. Please call us if you have a question about our collection interests or to plan for the provision of a legacy for future generations through your gift to the association.

We need your help!

The work of the association and museum continues with the addition of our impending move to the Peter Saily house. There is much to be done in preparation for that move and we hope to involve the membership.

We would like to let you know that we are in great need of volunteers, both now and when we are in the new facility. We invite those interested in helping with this project to a meeting, Monday, July 12, 7:30 PM, at the museum, 48 Court Street.

The following is a partial list of opportunities through which the membership can be involved:

Museum Guides: This could be on an occasional basis, for special events or a specific number of times per year. Docents needed Tuesday through Friday, 12-4 PM and Saturday, 1-4 PM. If you could spare even 1 hour a week to help in this important (and fun) activity we would be grateful. There will be training sessions so don't feel hesitant. The only prerequisite is that you enjoy contact with visitors and history.

General Help: There are many tasks throughout the museum which require no technical knowledge, such as occasional touchup painting, general fix-it jobs, and maintaining order in the building. Could you volunteer to be "on tap" on an as needed basis?

Garden Help: The Saily property has a very nice lawn, which at one time was surrounded by flower beds. Would you be willing to help form a garden guild to care for the property and restore some of its former beauty?

Archival Work: In preparation for the move, we requested a survey of the document collection from the Regional Council on Historical Agencies. It is vital that we put everything in order before the move. This is an area that requires a careful worker, who has an interest in cataloging.

North Country Notes: The addition of a co-editor is needed to help research articles for inclusion in this important monthly newsletter.

Bluff Point Light at Valcour Island: Committee members sought: Do you have a love of "our" lighthouse? Want to become involved? Opportunities abound in this area.

General Clerical Help: Stuffing letters, affixing address labels, etc. This could be on an as needed basis or a few hours once a month to help with North Country Notes mailing. Can you spare 2 hours per month? Perhaps you and a friend?

Educational Programs: Do you have an interest in sharing knowledge with others? Would you be interested in working on an educational program with children? adults?

Workshops: Do you have special skills or knowledge that you would be willing to share in a workshop setting? This could be a series of sessions or one time only.

Battle of Plattsburgh Celebration Weekend: Sept 9-12: Volunteers needed to be on hand during this four day celebration. There will be special exhibits at the museum along with demonstrations.

Heritage Project: An opportunity to share your family heritage and story and assist us in compiling living history stories about the families that comprise our county. This project will entail conducting oral history and data culminating in an exhibit. We welcome your input and involvement at any level. This month's article proves the value of such an endeavor. Without firsthand observances of life and events much of the immediacy of our history is lost. Minnie Stoughton, in the following autobiography with very direct language, tells a poignant and entertaining "story" of her life here, evoking an era and helping us to see and know the past.

Minerva L. Stoughton: A North Country Gal

The following autobiography, submitted by M.L. Stoughton and dated January 11, 1961 illustrates the spirit of the North Country in the words of a self-professed "North Country gal."

Minerva L. Stoughton (alias Min, Minnie, Jimmie) Born Nov. 9th in a blizzard; began life under the stove with the dog at Salmon River, New York.

Schooling: Dist. 9, Plattsburgh Hi & State Normal, Bachelor's at Temple University, Master's at University of Vermont

Study & Travel Program in Europe with Uni. of Vt. 1950

Study & Travel Program with Lafayette College 1954

Work: High school teaching – a plus of forty years
Summer at Cornell to re-vamp math curriculum for Peru Central
Revamping the Stone House farm – a plus twenty years
Worked on a farm – raised sheep, World War II, on plea of government for wool.
Worked on the railroad – Treasury Dept. Penn R.R., Phila, Pa.
Worked in the woods – just completed a 2 yr. "wood job" 1961
Head of household – a plus twenty years – not recognized by the Federal Govt. because of my non-marital status!!!

Recent: Summer across U.S. by car to visit National Parks & Shrines

Travel: Summer in Alberta, British Columbia and Alaska

Objectives:

I seem to have three main objectives in life:

1. To keep myself in a job
2. To keep my education pushed along (I did all college work while teaching)
3. To get myself a home
..... and it all worked out

Despite all the labor and sacrifice much of the above entailed, I have had, and am still having a wonderful life, sustained chiefly, I think by the drive to achieve worthily together with the everlasting spirit of adventure. Also, I engaged in sports, and I have many interests.

I have had many charming friends all along the way, and I can truly say—

*“Let me embrace God’s world and clasp the throng
of fellow creatures close, where ’er I go
For there can be no joy more full, more free
Than loving all the world as God loves me.”*

I was born and bred a North Country gal, have completed the circle. My home is at Salmon River still – a chief difference being, I am not required to sleep under the stove with the dog.

Note: The above autobiography printed in its entirety, bears a postscript: “To all BPW’S come to see me.” Minnie Stoughton lived out her life on the Stone Farm and is buried in Salmon River Cemetery.

New Items in the Museum Shop

The French Occupation of The Champlain Valley from 1609 to 1759, by Guy Omeron Coolidge. "This book is the only attempt at a connected account of the 150 years of French dominion over northern Vermont and New York." Price: \$18.00 (paperback) plus \$1.26 TX (shipping and handling: \$3.00).

July 11, 1999

is the date of the 6th Annual Clinton County Historical Association, Antique, Classic and Exotic Car Show! There is still time to enter your car, call the museum for an entry blank. To be held on the CVPH Campus (entrance from Cornelia Street) on Sunday, from 10 to 4 PM. Jointly held with the Foundation of CVPH Medical Center, this year's show promises some surprises. Refreshments will be available.

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