

NORTH COUNTRY NOTES

ISSUED MONTHLY EXCEPT SUMMER BY THE
CLINTON COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

No. 97

Allan S. Everest and Charles W. McLellan, Editors

November, 1973

Coming Meetings of the Association

The next meeting will be held in the Auditorium of the Plattsburgh Public Library on Monday evening, November 5th, at 8 o'clock. The speaker of the evening will be Mr. Jack Swan, liaison for Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri. He is the owner and director of the 1812 Homestead and Farm Working Museum at Poke-O-Moonshine. He will talk about the museum and his efforts to create a genuine working exhibit that will be an aid for the teaching of history. The public is cordially invited.

By all accounts the 75 people who attended the annual banquet were pleased with the arrangements and enchanted with the talk by Mrs. Margaret Lamy of the Adirondack Museum. She illustrated the history of the Adirondacks with slides of the paintings and dioramas at the Museum.

On December 3rd, the monthly meeting will be addressed by Mr. Robert Crepeau, teacher of English at Peru. He will present a paper, illustrated by slides, on "Ralph Waldo Emerson in the Adirondacks."

On January 7, 1974, the meeting will be held in Communication Lecture Hall at the College. Mr. Herbert McCoy, a member of the media staff at the College, will present a slide program on the antiques at the Alice T. Miner Museum in Chazy.

On February 4th, Miss Connie Pope, librarian at the College, will give an illustrated talk on the "Ghost Towns of Clinton County."

ABOUT THE BICENTENNIAL

The State Bicentennial Commission is sponsoring at Tarrytown on November 2 and 3 a conference on "The Loyalist Americans" of the American Revolution. Allan Everest from the Association is attending these sessions.

Nearer home, the Clinton County Bicentennial Commission under the chairmanship of Colonel Edward Glavin, not too long back from a year of teaching in England, is consulting representatives of the towns, and is putting together an integrated series of projects and events by which an appropriate county-wide commemoration of the nation's 200th birthday may take place.

RIDDLE OF THE MONTH

Old Riddle: Bishop Asbury came to the North Country in 1811 to dedicate the Methodist Church in Peru. While in Plattsburgh, he preached in the ballroom of Sperry's Tavern, part of which remains as 48 Broad Street.

New Riddle: About how many log schoolhouses were still in use in Clinton County in 1889?

REPORT FROM THE MUSEUM

The Association's Museum in City Hall has for its fall and winter schedule of openings the following hours: Fridays and Saturdays from 2 to 4 P.M. and Sundays from 1 to 5 P.M. School groups are welcome at other times by appointment through the director, Mrs. Helen Allan.

The two Elisha Arnold portraits by Asahel Powers which have occupied a prominent position in the Museum since its opening are currently on loan for a special exhibit at Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia. Mrs. Allan has recently returned from a visit to see these and other exhibits at Williamsburg. Mr. and Mrs. Charles Burdick are currently attending a seminar there.

The Journal of Benjamin Mooers

The following are excerpts from a journal kept by Lt. Benjamin Mooers, recently discharged with the disbanding of Hazen's regiment in June 1783. His notes recount the first permanent settlement in Clinton County, starting with the laborious journey, by water with difficult carries, from the Hudson to Lake Champlain.

The journal records a fragment of authentic frontier lore, including the preparation for a northern winter. Although the settlement at Point au Roche was made on land belonging to Dr. James Beekman of New York City, it was under the direction of General Moses Hazen who later persuaded Dr. Beekman to deed him a farm at the Point because of the "improvements" made there.

Repetitious entries are omitted, and spelling and punctuation have been corrected to assist the reader. The entry for October 11 concerning the lands of General Christie refers to the claims of the British officer to property in Clinton County. He lost his case in the New York courts. The journal has recently been discovered among the Bailey Papers at Burnt Hills, New York.

Newburgh, 25th July, 1783. This day crossed the river Hudson. Settled with Mr. Chinn and lodged at the Widow Height's at Fiskill Landing.

26th. Went to Poughkeepsie by land. After noon, took command of a batteau with her leading for Lake Champlain and 10 men: Lt. Francis Monty, Lt. Zaccheus Peaslee, Francis Monty Jr., Pierre Boilau, Charles Cloutier, Antoine Lavan, Joseph Le Tourneau, Antoine Lisembert, Pitte Abaere, Sgt. John Tessier.

29th. Arrived at Albany (Gen. Hazen was there) and took Mr. La Framboise.

29-30-31. Bought a number of articles in Albany, and among the rest two batteaux — at Fort George.

31. Gen. Hazen left Albany for Coos. The same evening I left it likewise with all my men. Went about 5 miles.

August 1st. Sent 3 loads of baggage by land to Stilwater. Went myself in the batteau with the men over the quicker running water. Arrived this night within 2 miles of Stilwater. I left the boat and went to the baggage.

2d. The boat arrived early. Loaded the baggage and with a fair wind arrived this afternoon at Saratoga Falls, where the baggage was taken out and transported by land a short mile. This evening arrived at Fort Miller.

3d. Transported the baggage $\frac{1}{2}$ mile by land. About 12 o'clock arrived at Fort Edward.

4th. This morning set out by land with the batteau and baggage to Fort George, 14 miles. Arrived in the afternoon. Found the batteaux I bought in Albany. Took one and left the other for Gen. Hazen, which I have Mrs. Doty's receipt for the same. This evening went about 9 miles across Lake George to a small island.

5th. Arrived at the landing place of Lake George near Ticonderoga.

6. Transported the 2 boats and loading over the Carrying Place into Lake Champlain. Went this afternoon with a fair wind to Crown Point. Arrived about sunset. Slept a few minutes and then proceeded down the lake. After boating about 12 or 14 miles the wind came ahead. Put ashore.

7th. Proceeded down the lake with little or no wind. In the afternoon the wind came ahead and blowed very hard. With difficulty we worked the western shore. This day came 20 odd miles.

8th. Arrived at the Island Valcour where we lay windbound the 9th.

10th. Arrived at the Point au Roche on Sunday.

11th. Began to work cutting down timbers, etc.

13th. (Beginning this day and running through the journal, various of his men are listed carefully as "sick, did not work").

17th. Sunday. No rain. Every day last week it rained.

18th. Rained all day, wind NE. Opened a barrel of flour.

21st. This night, sleep in the New House. Moved all in.

23d. Sowed turnips, etc.

24th. Sunday. Opened a barrel of beef.

26th. This morning left Point au Roche for Bay au Maquoin (probably Trombley Bay). Tessier and La Framboise are gone to making hay. When I came to Bay au Maquoin I found there have been several persons taking up land. Monty's house burnt all up, and saw the place where another house stood and was burnt. The man has it fenced and considerable more cleared. He has been there this summer and made two large stacks of hay. I thought as so much work had been done I had better let it alone until I hear further about the matter. Returned this evening back to Point au Roche.

28th. 4 Indian canoes went up.

29th. Brought hay 2 miles.

31st. Sunday. 6 Indian canoes went up. 4 stopped and 4 Indians came up to house. They said they were going to Crown Point.

1 Sept. Mr. William Brisby, one woman, a child and 4 young men lodged in my House this night. They were from Ticonderoga.

2d. Joseph Le Tourneau and Antoine Lisembert went off this morning with Mr. Brisby for Canada. Paid each $5\frac{1}{2}$ dollars for their work. Began to build a chimney.

- 3d. 5 batteaux went up the lake full of people. Appeared to be Canadians — Indians, some British and women.
- 4th. A large boat with a number of people on board from Ticonderoga stopped this night.
- 5th. The above boat set out about 3 o'clock this morning. A batteau full of Indians stopped and 15 came up to the House — most all boys, 2 girls. They said they had been up a little further for ginseng, were on their way to Canada.
- 8th. Small canoe with 2 men stopped, came to the house and said he had been up with prisoners to Crown Point, in a flag (of truce). Killed 2 ducks.
- 9th. Lt. Monty, Peter Boilau, John B. La Framboise and Francis Monty Jr. left this place for Albany. Settled with Boilau 8 dollars, La Framboise 8, Francis Monty Jr. four, has been sick, Francis Monty Sr. 8 on account. They took the long batteau to leave it at Lake George. J. Tessier 8 dollars, P. Abaere 8.
- 10th. A batteau with 9 or 10 men in it came up the lake almost opposite the house. Stopped a little off the shore, turned about and went back about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile, went ashore, most of them, on the land. Stayed a few minutes, then set off up the lake. They appeared to be British troops (probably from British-held Point au Fer).
- 11th. The above mentioned batteau went up about 1 mile, where they stayed last night. This morning one Mr. McLane and a soldier came to my House, were going hunting. After, one Captain and another officer of the 29th Regiment came and tarried some time; said they were going as far as Ticonderoga. This day sowed wheat and turnips.
- 17th. 3 Indian canoes passed, went down. One of them called, came to the House — 1 Indian, 1 boy, squaw and child. Changed some bread for a $\frac{1}{2}$ cwt. bear.
- 21st. Sunday. Rainy. This morning 3 Indians and 2 squaws came to my House. One of them has been to Dartmouth College 3 years, talks very good English. His name is John Athasoraren. A small boat passed up.
- 22d. The small boat that passed up yesterday stopped at the south side of Point au Roche, had on board Col. Ebenezer Allen, Mr. Davis and one other man. Col. Allen and the other man took the boat and set off for Grand Isle. Left Mr. Davis who came to my house for a boat to bring some things that were left on the Point. The wind being so high, afraid to venture with their load. Stayed all night.
- 23d. This morning myself and 3 men set out with Mr. Davis for Long Island. Carried him about 8 miles to the gut, left him at one Mr. Jordan's. They called him Doctor; his Christian name is Eleazer. This day snowed a little; hailed and rained this afternoon.
- 25th. 3 Indian canoes passed down, stopped and 16 Indians, squaws and children came to the House. Had been to Lake George for ginseng.
- 26th. A batteau passed down, appeared to be loaded with cattle. Killed 3 ducks. 4 Indian canoes stopped and encamped.
- 28th. Sunday. Last night about 9 o'clock one Mr. Brisby and 3 men came and lodged at my House. He had been here before. Set out for St. John's early this morning. Been up above Cumberland Head making hay. 2 batteaux loaded with men, women and children belonging to Sir John Johnson stopped on the point opposite the House, bound for Canada.
- 29th. This evening set out for Dutchman's Point for provisions. Bought a barrel of flour, 336 lb. at 5 dollars per cwt. and 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of pork at 10d York or rather half pistoroons. Returned about 11 or 12 o'clock this night and found 2 men at the House who said they came from Quebec, been to work for the British and had got their discharges.
- 30th. The above two men (masons) set out this morning early for Albany in a log canoe.
- 4th Oct. Killed a small racoon. French name chat Sauvage.
- 5th. Killed a bear.
- 7th. John Tessier went to Cumberland Head after a canoe. Returned this evening without it. Said he saw a horse and a place where their might be cut some good hay about 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the House. Caught 2 pike and 3 carp. One of the pike was 31 inches long, had a fish in him 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ ditto.
- 10th. This evening arrived a boat from Ticonderoga owned by Mr. Earl; had on board 8 fat cattle owned by one Doct. Davis, going with them into Canada. One Mr. Adams from near Schenectady was on board going into Canada after a son he had there.
- 11th. About 11 o'clock Gen. Hazen arrived at this place. Mrs. Hazen gone into Canada. The General brought the High Sheriff of the County whose name was Conky, and one Squire Masters and attached G. Christy's land at Point au Fer onto this place with the Isle la Motte.

A CIVIL WAR LETTER

(James Signor at Camp Bowen, Arkansas to his father, Philip Wager Signor in Plattsburgh on Nov. 11, 1862)

I received your letter of Oct. 6th in due time. I am pleased to learn that you can not only write your own name but that you can do it very well. Perhaps you did not understand the reason of my question. The fact was that so long a time had elapsed since you had written to me that I was in doubt, not so much that you could not write but as to whether you had a disposition to write. However, your letter has silenced all misgivings on that subject.

You ask how I enjoy camp life. I must answer that I could be better pleased with some other mode of living, but I have no complaint to make. Shall I give you a history of this day as a sample of what we do in camp? To start at 6 a.m. was Reveille, which called us up and the men into line for Roll Call; 6½ o'clock breakfast, which the men take their respective mess. We, Dr. Miller, Lt. Steward and myself took our in a small tent in rear of my own tent, the table being presided over by a very neat wench, whom we call "Jenny" who by the way is a very good cook. A Da'key named "Dick" is now engaged sparking her. If you do not understand the meaning of the term, Mira will tell you. At 7 o'clock is Surgeon's call and school of Company Officers presided over by the commander of the Regiment. At 8 o'clock is school of Non-commissioned Officers presided over by the Co. Commander, and it generally falls to my lot to preside. Guard mounting takes place also between the hours of 8 & 9 o'clock; from 10-11 o'clock is Squad drill & from 11 to 12 Co. Drill. Dinner call at 12½ o'clock; at 2 o'clock Battalion or Brigade drill and at 5 o'clock Dress Parade and supper immediately preceding or following dress Parade. At about 8½ m we have tattoo Roll call. Tonight the wind whistles from the north and blows the smoke into my tent until I am almost ready to cry. We expect to leave this camp in a day or two.

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