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Cover Photograph: Detail of Painting "Beaumont and St. Martin". Photograph courtesy of the Michigan State Medical Society.

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DEDICATION

By Allan S. Everest

As we launch our new publication, the *Antiquarian*, we are certain that it would have been welcomed by three of our devoted members who have left us in recent months. Grateful for the privilege of knowing them, we therefore dedicate this issue to the memory of Jack Ross, Woody McLellan and Paul Allen.

Jack Ross died in 1982 after a busy life of pursuing the roots of local history and seeking the advancement of his beloved North Country. He served on the Board of Trustees of the Historical Association for many years, as well as the committee that annually awards the McMasters prize for the best writing about northern New York. He was the historian for the villages of Rouses Point and Champlain and the town of Champlain, and one of his successful publications was a history of Rouses Point, *This Happened Here*. He was a recognized authority on Fort Montgomery, and he often helped young people with their research papers on that and other subjects. For years he ran a radio program entitled "North Country Story Teller," of which he was a past master. He was a working member of history-related organizations across northern New York and Vermont, but his interests embraced the whole Champlain Valley. He was a member or officer of the Crown Point Foundation, the Champlain Valley Council, the National Seaway Council, and the New York-Vermont Interstate Commission on the Lake Champlain Basin. We miss the stimulation that his accumulated knowledge and his enthusiasm gave to groups all across the North Country.

Woody McLellan succumbed early in 1983 to a prolonged illness. He was the North Country's most noted collector of all things historical. He preserved and supplemented family and regional books, manuscripts and ephemera going back to his ancestor, Pliny Moore, who founded the town of Champlain. By his expressed wish, many of his historical artifacts have been given to the Association, while his large library and manuscript collection have gone to Feinberg Library at the State University in Plattsburgh. He was sought after as a speaker by numerous regional organizations; he talked on local history, which he illustrated from his own collections, and travel, which he enlivened with slides from his frequent trips abroad. One of his most demanding but fruitful enterprises was the recording of gravestones in some five hundred cemeteries, many of which have disappeared since the project was started by his father in the 1930s. In 1960 Woody initiated the "North Country Notes," co-edited them for twenty-two years, and printed them for the first dozen of those years. He was a dedicated member of the Association and a Trustee for many years until his retirement because of ill health. His wit and healthy scepticism are still missed, but some of his knowledge becomes a permanent legacy to others through his generosity to history-minded institutions in this North Country.

Paul Allen also left us in 1983; his contribution to historical activities will not soon be forgotten. He served as Vice-President and President of the Association, as well as member of the Board of Trustees. He and his wife Laura were most generous with their time as docents at the museum on weekends, when help was often difficult to obtain. He was also liberal with his energy and truck when moving the museum out of the Public Library became necessary. He occupied the family farm which his ancestor, Jabez Allen, established in 1787 and which in 1949 was honored by Governor Dewey as a Century Farm for the hundred-plus years it was cultivated by one family. Ten years ago Paul wrote a short history of the property, which was published in "North Country Notes;" in it he captured the spirit of the successive generations which had lived there. He also enumerated the "evidence of activity of the time I have lived here," including a fall-out shelter which he hoped "always remains a sign of our times and never has to be used." His sense of family and of historical continuity is refreshing in an era of rapid change and dispersal of families. His steadiness of purpose and reliability in fulfilling his commitments created a vacuum when he departed.

"Beaumont and St. Martin". Oil painting in the collection of the Michigan State Medical Society. Photograph courtesy of the Michigan State Medical Society.

WILLIAM BEAUMONT, PIONEER PHYSIOLOGIST

Harold G. Klein

William Beaumont was born in 1785 at Lebanon, Connecticut, where he grew up on his father's farm and attended the village common school. Possessed of "a spirit of independence and adventure" (and probably of a dislike for farming), he left the "paternal roof" and headed north during the winter of 1806-7. He was 22 and his possessions were a horse and cutter, a barrel of cider and one hundred dollars. Apparently he had no particular destination and eventually ended up at Champlain, New York, in the spring of 1807. He became the village schoolmaster and during the next three years he read medical books in addition to teaching. After three years of teaching and reading, he became an apprentice in medicine to a physician in St. Albans, Vermont. He continued to read all the available medical texts of the day and in June, 1812, William Beaumont was licensed to practice medicine.

War with England was declared during the summer of 1812 and an army unit was stationed at Plattsburgh in September, 1812. Beaumont joined the army as surgeon's mate. His first battle experience came when the US Army attacked Toronto (York), Canada in April, 1813. The Americans succeeded in driving the British from their fort but the British blew up their powder magazine, resulting in the death of 60 and the wounding of over 300 US soldiers. Beaumont wrote of the event in his journal: "Twas enough to touch the veriest heart of steel and move the most relentless savage. Imagine the shocking scene, where fellow-beings lie mashed and mangled—legs and arms broken and sundered heads and bodies bruised and mutilated to disfigurement! My deepest sympathies were aroused—I cut and slashed for 36 hours without food or sleep."

Other battles occurred during that campaign, but by September 11, 1814 Beaumont was back in Plattsburgh to participate in the famous naval and military engagement that occurred here in Clinton County when the British invaded the Champlain Valley from Canada.

In one of Dr. David S. Kellogg's oral history interviews (done in 1887) of people who were alive at the time of the Battle of Plattsburgh one person recalls that, "I heard my father say he was in Dr. William Beaumont's office afterwards and that the doctor had the inwards of soldiers who had been blown up. He did a great deal of dissecting on the dead soldiers." It is interesting and noteworthy to see here an example of an inquiring surgeon-scientist taking advantage of an unusual opportunity to advance his knowledge and practice his skills. Another instance will occur when William Beaumont and Alexis St. Martin meet in Michigan.

After the War of 1812, Beaumont settled in Plattsburgh and went into partnership with a fellow army surgeon. In addition to the medical practice, they also ran a drug and grocery store, "a frequent custom among early American physicians." The location of this establishment was at the intersection of Margaret and Bridge Streets at the place where Zachary's is now located. The original building was probably burned in a fire in the 1800's, which devastated the downtown business area. In Zachary's there is a plaque on the wall near the cash register which commemorates Dr. Beaumont's historical association with this location in Plattsburgh.

By 1819 Beaumont was on the move again, rejoining the army as a surgeon and being posted to Fort Mackinac, then a fur-trading settlement in the wilderness of Upper Michigan. It was here, in June, 1822, that a French-Canadian fur-trapper, Alexis St. Martin, was shot accidentally while standing in the fur company's store. Dr. Beaumont was summoned from the fort and treated the ghastly wound as well as possible, but remarked that, "The man can not live thirty-six hours; I will come and see him by and by." As we know, St. Martin did survive and Beaumont carefully doctored him back to full health, except for the opening in St. Martin's body wall and stomach wall. Through this aperture Beaumont made the observations and conducted the experiments that are described in detail in his famous *Physiology of Digestion*. Beaumont also described in detail the wound and his treatment of it, which took about two years. Recovery must be considered miraculous because the load of gunshot blew away part of St. Martin's side, breaking ribs and opening up the abdominal and thoracic cavities and the stomach itself. Lacerated and burned by the blast (his shirt was set afire) were portions of his lungs, stomach and diaphram, "exhibiting altogether an appalling and hopeless case."

After St. Martin had recovered, Beaumont began his observations and experiments in May, 1825. Beaumont was transferred from one army post to another and St. Martin went with him, being now in Beaumont's "employ." Apparently St. Martin grew tired of this arrangement and, when they were in Plattsburgh again, escaped from Beaumont and returned to Quebec, Canada. He lived in Canada for four years before Beaumont was able to track him down and convince him to come back for more

experiments. During this time St. Martin worked as a fur trapper and transporter; he also married and fathered two children. Beaumont did get St. Martin to come back, this time to Fort Crawford on the upper Mississippi River, and more experiments were conducted. Others were conducted in Plattsburgh and Washington, DC, as late as 1833. In addition, doctors, medical students and scientists at every place Beaumont and St. Martin visited were allowed to inspect the stomach fistula. (Apparently St. Martin received extra money for this.) There was also some discussion of Beaumont and St. Martin traveling to Europe in order for European physiologists to utilize St. Martin in studies on digestion. Beaumont's book, published in Plattsburgh in 1833, had been sent to Europe, was widely translated and read with great interest by leading physiologists. The European trip was apparently thwarted by the insistence of St. Martin's wife that he remain in Quebec. St. Martin did so and lived on a small farm in Quebec until he died in 1880 at the age of 83.

After St. Martin's final departure, Beaumont began writing his account of this study, which consisted of 238 observations and experiments done during the four periods of time when St. Martin was in Beaumont's "employ." Still in the army, Beaumont was given permission to go to Plattsburgh to work on readying the manuscript for print. He was helped in this task by his cousin, Dr. Samuel Beaumont. The book was printed in Plattsburgh by F.P. Allen in 1833.

Sir William Osler, writing in 1902, stated, "The *Experiments and Observations* attracted universal attention, both at home and abroad. The journals of the period contained very full accounts of the work, and within a few years the valuable additions to our knowledge filtered into the text books of physiology..."

Another physician-scientist commented, "It would be difficult to point out any observer who excels him in devotion to truth and freedom from the trammels of theory or prejudice. He tells plainly what he saw and leaves everyone to draw his own inferences, or where he lays down conclusions he does so with a degree of modesty and fairness of which few perhaps in his circumstances would have been capable."

In 1834 Beaumont was ordered to an army post at St. Louis, Missouri, and in 1839 he resigned from the army to go into private medical practice. He was still intensely interested in furthering his research on digestion, using St. Martin. Correspondence between Beaumont and St. Martin took place during the period from 1836 through 1852. Beaumont offered to pay St. Martin and to support his family, if he would come to St. Louis and participate in more experiments. Beaumont even sent his son to visit St. Martin in an effort to induce Alexis to join William in St. Louis. Others also tried. The Medical Society of London raised money to be used to bring St. Martin to England for the study of his stomach. None of these efforts succeeded; St. Martin remained on his farm near Montreal until his death. Even in death St. Martin (or, more correctly, his family) foiled the scientists in their efforts to make use of his body. Sir William Osler, then on the faculty of McGill University Medical School, saw St. Martin's death notice in the newspaper and attempted to get permission to autopsy the body for purposes of obtaining the stomach for deposition in the Army Medical Museum in Washington, DC. He was refused and the last sacraments of the Catholic Church were given to an intact Alexis St. Martin. However, "The body was then in such an advanced stage of decomposition that it could not be admitted into the church, but had to be left outside during the funeral service. The family resisted all requests, most pressing as they were, on the part of the members of the medical profession for an autopsy, and also kept the body at home much longer than usual and during a hot spell of weather, so as to allow decomposition to set in and baffle, as they thought, the doctors of the surrounding country and others. They had also the grave dug eight feet below the surface of the ground in order to prevent any attempt at a resurrection."

William Beaumont continued in medical practice until 1853 when he suffered an accidental fall which led to an infection that was fatal. He died April 25, 1853 at the age of 67.

In 1902 Sir William Osler summarized his life thus:

"Beaumont is the pioneer physiologist of this country, the first to make an important and enduring contribution to this science. His work remains a model of patient, persevering investigation, experiment and research, and the highest praise we can give him is to say that he lived up to and fulfilled the ideals with which he set out and which he expressed when he said:

"Truth, like beauty, when unadorned, is adorned the most, and, in prosecuting these experiments and enquiries, I believe I have been guided by its light."

CARING FOR THE POOR IN CLINTON COUNTY, 1800–1929

THE POOR, THE POORHOUSE, AND THE POORMASTER IN RURAL NEW YORK

William Culver and Cornel Reinhart

Most thoughtful persons in the nineteenth century would have agreed with James Bryce, an English writer and social critic, who hailed America as a land of opportunity. Like later historians Bryce cited western land as the key to America's prosperity. Only Eastern cities held the beginnings of a permanent pauper class to which Bryce alluded with considerable foreboding. A time will come, Bryce wrote, when the causes which have produced pauperism in Europe will do so in America, "when the best lands in the Mississippi valley will have been occupied, when all necessary railroads and public works will have been executed, when the pressure of population will have become as great as it is now in England..." Yet the experience of the poor, as reflected in public attitudes, debates and policy, in Clinton County, New York suggest somewhat different images. Settled after the end of the American Revolution, Clinton County was both a frontier and largely rural settlement. Even in the face of abundant land and extensive resources, paupers and pauperism existed from the beginning. Indeed, the ancient biblical adage that the poor are always with you is a more accurate account of the county's earliest history than Bryce's.

Adopted almost directly from Elizabethan Poor Laws, Clinton County's response to the poor was similar to other rural New York settlements. Local responsibility, at the level of town government, was mandated by state legislation of 1784. Actual treatment of the poor was vested in the hands of the Overseers of the Poor, two of whom were elected at the annual town meeting. Commonly referred to as the Poormaster it was these men (no women were ever elected) who, for well over a century, became the significant point of contact between the faceless and often powerless poor and the numerous governmental responses to their existence. Summarized in an 1803 legal handbook for town officials, the government's principle concern for the poor was establishing responsibility for their care and, more importantly, determining who would pay for such care. Those individuals known to local authorities posed no apparent difficulty as the law placed responsibility for paupers on the immediate natural extended family. There is little evidence that this statute was enforced. Strangers, however, posed a thornier problem. Called settlement, the legal issue was to identify the town responsible for a migrant poor person. Strangers were to be reported to the Poormaster within 40 days of their arrival in one's home. If a stranger was reported and after investigation found liable to become a charge on the town he could be removed back to the next closest town and so on until returned to his original settlement.

Within these legal limits the actual practices of the Poormaster are interestingly revealed in the Overseers' records of the Town of Peru. By paying a five dollar licensing fee an individual could receive and care for the poor in his or her home. Thus, Richard Keese was both an early Poormaster and receiver of the poor. A constant stream of people arrived on other people's doorsteps. In the winter of 1810 and 1811 Keese kept a "crazy man," a "smallpox man," and a William Davis, sick, to be doctored with a wife and two children. Frequently entire families arrived and are reported. Few of these numerous families or individuals are sent elsewhere. Most are boarded out to others who are paid stipulated fees per week to board them. Yet this arrangement explicitly entails the indenture of those so boarded. Thus Eunice Barker and her child are boarded at Joel Buck's at $1.50 per week but Eunice is discharged for refusing to comply with "our terms."

Town officials sometimes allowed individual ex-

penses of a special nature. Uriah Waterman, for example, proved to be rather difficult. Several persons boarded Uriah but his opium and tobacco habits were expensive and made living with him unpleasant. In 1818 the town allowed William Lewis $110.67 for keeping Uriah and "braking (sic) of him, from the habit of taking opium."While Uriah's situation was unique in some respects, the general pattern was typical. The poor were frequently boarded out at a set fee and other expenses paid as required. Frequently those in need of assistance were also close to death. The expenses paid to Calvin Everest for caring for a dying pauper for 10 days are typical: one quart of brandy and 2 pounds of sugar loaf, 94 cents, two gallons of vinegar and a pint of mustard, $1.09, five yards of sheeting, and one shirt, 56 cents, boarding nurses $10. Not recorded here but typically present: the cost of the coffin, $2.00, the cost of digging the grave, $1.00, and for "trouble getting the jobs done," 50 cents. Medical expenses, both for doctor visits and medicines were also common.

The record for these early years reveals a concern for immediate relief, most often in someone else's home, with the poor typically the sick, old and dying. Whole families were taken in, cared for and often those helped were in turn directly indentured to those they lived with. This pattern emphasized family centered relief and de-emphasized mobility, social as well as physical. Reform was seldom discussed. The effort to "brake" Uriah Waterman's opium habit was the exception.

Rising costs, and the appearance of numerous "foreign" poor (Canadians and Vermonters) occasioned in part by the War of 1812 helped to introduce new methods and indeed new attitudes towards the county's poor after 1816. The so-called "New England System" of auctioning the poor coupled with the building of the County Poor House established a harsher, and in time, a radical departure in treatment of the county's poor.

The remarks of the Chazy Town Supervisor suggest these new directions. "There is no poor house or house of industry," he wrote, "but the authorities of the town have for four years past, at the annual town meetings, sold at public sale all the poor of the town; this mode of proceeding has been the means of lessening the expenses for the support of the poor, from the year 1817, at least two thirds. For none except those who are objects of charity, will apply to the town for assistance, and be exposed for sale and liable to labor. The poor in this way are provided for much better, as the person who bids them in, gives bonds, for his faithful performances." Undoubtedly the Town realized some reduction in expenses with the introduction of this practice but the claim of better provision for the poor seems less tenable. The system in fact encouraged precisely the opposite. Thus Abijah Hammond, speaking to the Westchester County Agricultural Society in 1820, asserted that most of the poor "are now *sold*, (his italics) as the term is, that is, bid off, to those who agree to support them on the lowest terms, to purchasers nearly as poor as themselves, who treat them in many instances more like brutes than like human beings . . ." Despite their being "sold" at that most democratic of American political instutitions, the annual town meeting, apparently few persons, if any, contrasted the situation of the poor with the plight of the southern slave. When the New England auction system finally expired in Clinton County is not clear but its continued use in the United States was reported as late as 1926.

While the auction system was simply an extension, albeit much harsher, of family-oriented relief the County Poorhouse system was a major departure from past practices. The Elizabethan Poor Law of 1601 had established local, that is, town government as the agency responsible for poor relief. Clinton County Supervisors decided to consolidate all poor relief in a single county structure. By 1827 a farm had been purchased in Beekmantown and later that year Clinton County's first countywide Poorhouse was opened. Shortly thereafter the County Board abolished all distinctions between county and town paupers and resolved that the expense of maintaining "all the poor in the county be a county charge."

Stimulated by economic conditions New York's Secretary of State V. N. Yates conducted a comprehensive statewide survey of pauperism, the first such in the nation. The study asked Poor Law officials about local practices and problems. Submitted to the New York State legislature in 1824 the Yates report criticized excessive costs for litigation and administration. Yates strongly recommended the establishment of County Poorhouses with attached farms. The county poor were to be centralized in one location, to labor there according to their ability. Yates also called for work houses or penitentiaries to be built in connection with the Poorhouse and used for reception of vagabonds and beggars.

The County Poorhouse Act of 1824 with numerous exceptions, had created just such a system. This act required County Boards to purchase land and erect Poorhouses. It also provided that any person thereafter applying for relief could, upon certification of a Justice of Peace or Overseer of the Poor be removed, against their will, from his or her home and sent to the County Poorhouse.

Contrary to Yates' hopes and the legislature's resolve, the new system fared about as badly as the old. The result, in Clinton County, was a mixture of practices with both systems operating side by side.

Who then was liable to be sent to the Poorhouse? The critical definition hinged on dependency. Anyone unable to care for themselves was in jeopardy. Insanity, idiocy, epilepsy, paralysis, general feeblemindedness, blindness, deafness, or vagrancy were cause for removal. The result, of course, was a mixed population of sick and old, insane and retarded, young and normal in the Poorhouse. Soon to be replaced, the older Home was visited in 1873 by a County Committee. They reported atrocious conditions. Sixty three paupers were crowded into 9 rooms. One man was discovered staying all day in bed to keep from freezing in a room devoid of heat. Another found dying was reported "limbs and body a mass of corruption from foul disease." One bath a week was usual, but all used the same tub of water. The basement contained the "jail" which held the worst of the insane and violent. The committee saw a man there who had not seen daylight in sixteen years and was not expected to do so for the remainder of his life. Perhaps fittingly, a pauper upon arrival at the Home, would be asked to construct his own coffin by his own hand. Partially in response to the committee's report, but also due to serious structural problems with the older Home, the county contracted the building of a new Home in 1875.

Physically, the new county Poorhouse was a substantial improvement on the older structure. Praised for its accommodations and size the new Home was also heated by an elaborate steam system allowing frequent and individual baths. The kitchen boasted two large steam kettles for soup and coffee, a large brick oven for baking bread and a mammoth cooking stove. Opposite the kitchen, were cells for the refractory paupers, that is, the vicious or violently insane. Likewise the third floor had rooms equipped with grates to hold uncooperative paupers. At times these cells or lock-up rooms held children as young as fourteen. Clearly, despite much improvement the new house still suffered from the older defects; especially the problem of a starkly diverse group of occupants.

While certainly an imposing physical structure the new Poorhouse was also symbolic of the middle class's ambiguity in their efforts to deal with the poor and the causes of pauperism. Like the Poorhouse which preceded it the new building was thought of, in part, as a home. Surrounded by ninety acres the County Home was ideally viewed as a productive farm and broadly reflective of the older farm family centered life and local extended family relief efforts. But unlike the older Homes the new Poorhouse was burdened with the hopes for somehow changing the occupants themselves. A new generation of reformers, often religious and frequently led by women, placed great faith in institutionalization as the best means to alter or abolish poverty through "moral elevation" of the paupers themselves.

Clinton County's reformers were led by the Reverend and Mrs. Francis Hall. Members of the New York State Charities Aid Association, she and her husband served on the Association's local committee and were officially designated Visitor of the Poorhouse. A temperance leader, Mrs. Hall also helped organize the local Women's Relief Corps and played a major role in the establishment and operation of the Home for the Friendless, the county orphanage. For the Halls, like Josephine Shaw Lowell who led New York State's charity movement, reform meant the altering and elevating of individual character. While this could and did require institutional reform such reforms were well within established social parameters.

One of several collection boxes used in the area to solicit funds for the poor. Collection of the Kent-Delord House Museum.

These middle class reformers strongly supported methods which would interrupt "hereditary pauperism," by altering family behavior of the poor, specifically, by segregating the sexes, including married couples, and by removing children from impoverished parents. While the state wide effort to segregrate the sexes in state and local institutions was led by Josephine Shaw Lowell, Francis Hall vigorously supported Mrs. Lowell's ideas in Clinton County.

Josephine Lowell's ideas were most vividly expressed in a speech she read to the Chicago Conference of Charities in June, 1879. Increased crime, pauperism, and insanity were directly traceable, in her view to "the unrestrained liberty allowed to vagrant and degraded women." Mrs. Lowell urged that wherever possible such women be completely isolated in separate women's institutions and instructed there to proper conduct. If, however, there was no hope of reforming these women it would still be the "wisest economy to build homes for them, where they might be shut up from the present day till the day of their death." Likewise all children born in public institutions should be removed from such "low influences." Mrs. Lowell's efforts resulted in the erection of two Houses of Refuge for Women in New York State.

In Clinton County these concerns were physically expressed in the 1875 Poorhouse which was designed from the beginning with two separate wings to segregate the sexes both at night and during daytime activities. There were, of course, also two separate dining rooms and in a Visitor's Report the Local Charities Aid Committee expressed satisfaction that their advice to have a matron for the female wing of the Home had been accepted. The absolute segregation of the sexes was completed by the installation of a door from the wash room to the clothes yard.

Like sexual segregation the desire to alter family patterns led logically to taking pauper children from their parents. State legislation of 1875 did precisely this by removing all children ages 2 to 14 from county Poorhouses to separate institutions. Clinton County anticipated this state-wide movement by chartering the Home for the Friendless of Northern New York in May, 1874.

The State Board of Charities Standing Committee Report of 1882 stressed the significance of the removal of children from County Poorhouses. They asserted that this exclusion of children led to the "most important" change in the Poorhouse population since the creation of the State Board in 1867. Noting the practice in some counties of whole families making the Poorhouse their winter quarters they believed the exclusion of children struck at this evil, as, "the natural affection of human nature, the dread of family separation becomes strong stimulants to parents to independent self support. But where the whole family is not saved, the law by turning the children from the door of the Poorhouse into private families or, temporarily into orphan asylums, until good homes can be found for them, saves the children from being tainted and demoralized by Poorhouse influences and instead of becoming the natural recruits of pauperism,...they grow up to become self-reliant, useful citizens."

While concern over pauper families was paramount in the State Board's report a secondary concern was emerging. Disenchantment with the Poorhouse itself was being expressed in many quarters and the report of visitors like the Halls continued to agitate the question. The result was steady movement away from the Poorhouse in the last quarter of the 19th century. Indeed, in another fundamental shift in the treatment of the poor, poverty itself changed, not by changing poor families or the character of the poor but by simply changing its definitions. The latter nineteenth century saw whole groups excluded from the Poorhouse beginning with children in 1875 and including the insane, and mentally deficient in the 1890's. Once reclassified out of the pauper category these new groups now received specific institutional attention and were finally freed from the stigma associated with pauperism. Only in the twentieth century have dependent older persons and the seasonal unemployed also received special classification and escaped from the ranks of the poor. By 1926 the Poor farm was totally discredited as an instrument of relief.

Having never totally abandoned the colonial and early national practice of outdoor relief the practice was strongly revived in 1929. The major features of modern public welfare were put in place in New York in that year. Signed into law by the then Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt this sweeping new state legislation was the result of several decades of unhappiness with the system of public responsibility for the poor. The key to final reform was the 1923 report of the Joint Committee on Taxation and Retrenchment which severely criticized the patchwork and inefficient Poorhouse system. The Public Welfare Law of 1929 preceded the Great

Depression and clearly reflected the experiences of years of difficulty with 19th century approaches to pauperism. In the reorganization that followed the now archaic terms, pauper, Poormaster, Poorhouse and charity were largely replaced, if not in fact, at least in name. The Overseers of the Poor became Public Welfare Officials; The State Board of Charities became the State Board of Social Welfare. The new law also significantly read: "As far as possible families should be kept together, and they should not be separated for reason of poverty alone. Whenever practical relief shall be given a poor person in his own home".

In glancing back over nearly two hundred years of Clinton County's efforts to assist its poor inhabitants the historian is most struck by the deeply rooted bedrock quality of pauperism or poverty. Its ability to defy numerous middle class attempts to alter or abolish it suggest not only its persistent permanence but also a cultural inability of those in positions of responsibility to seriously weigh alternatives. Particularly interesting is the pattern of significant changes, indeed near-total reversals, in governmental policy over the same lengthy period; home relief and family responsibility of the Colonial and Early National periods was sharply repudiated by the Yates reforms of 1824; indeed, the entire 19th century was devoted to institutional responses to poverty, and yet New York's "modern" welfare legislation of 1929 returned again to home and family relief.

The supreme irony, of course, was that those same values were diametrically opposed to the lack of mobility and individualism implicit in family ties and stability. Reformers themselves were deeply torn by these conflicting values. Wanting to destroy hereditary pauperism they attacked the families of the poor seeking, more than anything else, to inculcate the values of good homes and good families to uprooted institutionalized individuals. Most unhappily for the poor as well as myriad reformers and the layers of governmental agencies responsible for the poor, the issue -- that is, the poor themselves -- refused to go away.

JOURNAL OF A CANDIDATE

M. L. Christy

Clinton County Historical Museum

Friday, May 11, 1917

As it seems to be my destiny to serve my country, I am now en route to Plattsburg, New York for the military training camp. I have deduced, the keeping of a journal of all my activities at the camp will be a great benefit. Thus, my first entry is being made while on the train from Buffalo, New York. Mother insisted upon paying the full roundtrip fare, $18.69, in the event I could not withstand the possible tortures the Army would impose upon me. In passing conversation with my brother Charles, Mother had done the same when he had left for West Point. She refuses to admit we are no longer her little boys. Charles suggested conceding to her wishes, as the money could be refunded at a later date. At least one member of the family has some confidence in my abilities.

My reason for maintaining a journal is to con-

stantly have beside me the memories, the emotions, the toil, the sweat of the days that will have made me whatever it is I may become; an excellent officer and leader, I hope! I must admit, while I write this, I am filled with excitement and trepidation. Charles has, naturally, extolled to me the virtues of a four year military academy. He has also taken great joy in horrifying Mother with the ordeals he faces as well. I certainly hope Plattsburg proves to be more lenient where recognition week is concerned. I am determined to succeed. All the men in our family have served in the Army in very honorable capacities. I wish only to fill the shoes of those before me in the same honorable fashion.

Sunday, May 13, 1917

I recall, the last few minutes aboard the train, various thoughts ran through my mind. First, I was worried about the unknown events I would soon face. Second, I asked what was next. Third, I wondered if I would make friends. Fourth, I finally diagnosed my nervousness, replaced it with pride, and stepped from the train, with my head held high, and a determination my forefathers would have been proud of. I was to make something of myself here, and it would affect the rest of my life.

It was such a nice day, I decided to walk to the camp, knowing it was not too far. The contained energy from the train and the excitement of my new location caused the walk to pass quickly.

When I reached the entrance to the camp, I was heartily greeted by a Corporal Calhoun. He directed me to the Gymnasium where I would find all the information I would need until Tuesday. It was here I discovered the Thirteenth Company would be my home for the next three months. Upon finding the barracks occupied by the Thirteenth, three men stopped and introduced themselves. The oldest was a local business man by the name of Charles Harrison. Steven Archibald, a Harvard graduate, and William Louis, a Dartmouth graduate, were the same age as I. They pointed a bed out to me and then suggested I tour the encampment with them. I heartily agreed.

Monday, May 14, 1917

Charles became our tour guide today and introduced us to the community of Plattsburg. A benefit to befriending a local chap, is the acquaintances he has, and very lovely ones at that. Charles introduced us to four very attractive ladies, all sisters who would be volunteering their charms at the Hostess House. Rebecca, Susan, Anna and Martha Ebersole had been hostesses at the previous encampments. Upon further questioning, none had beaux and were concerned solely with aiding the men with the duties required at the House, a very reputable and well chaperoned establishment providing cake and coffee like Mother would make.

The townspeople were awaiting the arrival of the troop trains.

Tuesday, May 15, 1917

Today we were awakened early with the din and clatter of some 3,500 men for the first day of camp. We were all told to pick up equipment at the gymnasium and return to our barracks. Company assignment was given at the same time. By noon, we'd all been given our equipment and company numbers. From here we were marched to the mess for midday meal. We were allowed one half hour to eat. We then reported back to the barracks for company assignments. At this time, we were introduced to our Company Instructor, Captain James L. Eagel,and our Assistant Company Instructor, Lieutenant Francis Degen. Captain Eagel, a formidable man in appearance, made it clear he expected nothing less than perfection from us. He then delegated the assignment of cadence caller, candidate company commander, assistant, first sergeant, and corporal to Lt. Degen.

After completion of this, we arranged our bunks according to squads. We were then shown the proper way to fold our clothes and store those along with our books and toiletries in the chests. These chests were stored under our bunks. Then we were shown the correct way in which to make a bunk. The corners must be in a forty-five degree angle. The sheets must be so tight a coin could be bounced upon it. The blanket must be folded in such a manner it became a twelve by twelve inch square. It was explained, when we go overseas or on maneuvers, each man must be confined to the smallest of space to provide for more men. After mess, we gathered around the blackboard in the barracks for instruction on the correct drilling and marching procedures. We were also ordered to review the drill chapters in *The Infantry Drill Regulations* also known as *The Plattsburg Manual*. Tomorrow, we would practice drill in our squads. Afterward, we would combine to form a company and drill as a whole. The 2130 bell sounded, informing us of a half an hour 'til taps. The schedule shown us will

keep us very occupied with little time for recreation.

Wednesday, May 16, 1917

Today was a busy day for many. Several men in this company discovered not all pieces of equipment fit correctly. For those with this problem, an hour was allotted for exchange. The afternoon was spent with a lecture on military hygiene and also military regulations. For example, how we should salute and whom. Some minutes were spent disagreeing over the whom. Capt. Eagel informed us we should salute every human who moves as long as he is not a candidate. Those who disagreed, claimed we were to be officers, thus, we should not salute the non-commissioned officers. Capt. Eagel politely informed the dissidents they were nothing as yet, and it was to be discovered whether they or any of us were correct officer material. Until graduation day, none of us had rank, thus, we would show those who did the respect each deserved.

Thursday, May 17, 1917

After reveille sounded, one hundred thirty-four of us formed for calisthenics before our barracks. We must perform these every morning to prepare us for each grueling day. We will begin slowly, but as each day passes, we will do more and quickly as well.

Today is the day where each of us will be psychiatrically evaluated. The good doctor has chosen to do the Thirteenth first as it should contain the most unfit according to his previous experience with past camps. His motto is 'weed out the worst first.' According to Charles, the doctor believes everyone has gone to the birds, except him, of course. Charles advised us to just be ourselves. My turn came shortly after lunch. At which time I could feel my stomach turn a bit. However, I did pass the examination with the pronouncement I am a bit eccentric. Mainly, one splotch he showed me, I felt showed a likeness to a can of overturned boot polish rather than a spider. Upon completion of the whole company, he decided we all belonged together, but none were weeded out of the camp. It was a tense day for each of us. Taps came as a great relief to one and all.

Friday, May 18, 1917

Today, we spent learning the correct functions of a rifle. We had to take it apart and put it back together in less than three minutes. We were also shown the correct way in which to clean it. Lt. Degen felt we were not following the manual as closely as we should. After his demonstration, it did seem to go much easier and faster. There is something about the real versus the illustration. We then practiced drilling with the rifles on the parade field.

Saturday, May 19, 1917

Today we were awakened by the booming voice of the Lieutenant. He informed us we would take a short hike after morning mess. We should, in the meantime, pack our knapsacks with the usual gear carried for maneuvers. The short hike became a brisk seven mile run in the area surrounding the camp. We returned in time for midday mess. The afternoon we had free to visit the Hostess House or the Y.M.C.A. Steven, William and I selected the Hostess House in hopes of seeing the Ebersole girls. It was not their day to work. However, we did taste the coffee and cake. Ah, Mother, you have been outdone. We then proceeded to the Y.M.C.A. Next Saturday a welcoming dance will be held. We decided to contact the Ebersole girls as soon as possible that we may have the honor of a dance or two.

Sunday, May 20, 1917

Today, I slept in. I awakened in time to attend the nine o'clock services at the Y.M.C.A. The good reverend's sermon greatly applied to our life in the camp. He expanded on the trials of Job. In the afternoon I passed the Hostess House and encountered Martha Ebersole. I requested a dance from her during next Saturday's dance and she promised as many as I would wish. Wonderful young lady!

I spent a great deal of time at the Y.M.C.A. this afternoon as well. I wrote letters home and also to my brother Charles who is at present in France as a liaison with a British company. I also spent time writing in my journal. This week has passed quickly and I have thoroughly enjoyed it. I feel highly challenged, both mentally and physically. The rest of today will be spent polishing my gear and studying the manuals.

Monday, May 21, 1917

Today began with the usual calisthenics. However, we did not drill this morning. We spent the morning practicing the semaphore. We were tested on what we had memorized, which was little, and it was a curious sight to the innocent bystander who saw a candidate with his eyes in the book and his arms waving in contorting ways. Little did I know, I looked more foolish than most.

The afternoon was spent in lecture on trench warfare. The main purpose at this time is to teach us the correct forms of digging a trench. Tomorrow we will put some lessons to good use.

Wednesday, May 23, 1917

We drilled and semaphored today. Received letters from Mother. She hopes all is well and wishes the Army will treat her son well. She will be present for graduation day. She realizes I will not use the return portion of my ticket. In her way, she admits I am no longer her little boy, but a man. Father included a short note. He informed me Charles would be arriving in the following week from France. Charles will be the guest speaker at our camp. His topic will be the need for the camps and their applicability to the situation in France.

Saturday, May 26, 1917

Had little time to prepare for the dance at the Y.M.C.A. We marched ten miles today. Capt. Eagel is a man of great energy. He carried a full pack and led us over hill and in the meadows. One must respect a man who asks nothing less of his men than he will do himself. Lt. Degen brought up the rear.

Steven, William, and I met Charles at 2000 hours and walked to the Candidates' Club (Y.M.C.A.). We did encounter the sisters and proceeded to dance their feet off. Martha is a very sweet and intelligent lady. She has promised to be my guide tomorrow after church. I have also invited her to dinner next Saturday. However, she must confer with her family first. Steven and William have asked the same of Susan and Anna. We feel confident

their parents will agree.

Monday, May 28, 1917

We have practiced on the rifle range. I was fortunate enough to hit the center of the target three out of four times. The fourth, my rifle misfired. I received a lecture, while at the camp hospital, on the correct procedures of rifle cleaning. I still believe the fault lay in the rifle and not my cleaning. Due to the mishap, I was made an example of. I was introduced during the evening mess. The instructor pointed to the bandage on my head and stated, "The correct procedures of rifle cleaning is vital, or you may well end up as this chap or even worse." Many snickers filled the air. However, I did not dignify this error. I know the fault is not mine.

Spent the evening with Lt. Degen studying the possible malfunctions of my rifle since I maintained my innocence. We discovered the fault was not mine. How wrong I may not have been, still does not alter the reputation I received at mess this evening.

Tuesday, May 29, 1917

At morning mess, I was again called to stand before the other members of the camp. I was rather surprised. The rifle instructor apologized. He explained the fault lay in the bullet I used. He went on to say I displayed the correct manner in which an officer should behave, proclaiming my innocence only to those who asked. He then thanked me for my cooperation. Due to this incident, I came by the nickname of 'Dud'.

Wednesday, May 30, 1917

I was called to the camp Commander's office after mess this morning. I was surprised at the invitation, but I suspected it was due to the arrival of my brother. IT WAS! I was told in no uncertain terms, nepotism was not allowed in the Army nor in this camp. Then, to my surprise, the Colonel asked me if I would be interested in escorting Lt. Charles Russell. His aide informed me Lt. Russell would arrive in one half hour. I should meet him at

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the camp entrance at that time. My regular duties of the day had been waived. Escorting Lt. Russell would be a vital and urgent matter.

Thursday, May 31, 1917

Yesterday passed quickly. The short time spent with Charles was pleasant and informative. We discussed the more intimate details of the camp. Martha. He has hopes of meeting her one day soon,since I extolled her virtues. Charles also informed me of his impending marriage to Juliet, a girl back home. The worst, his order to return to France. He described the atmosphere in France. I found it difficult to concentrate on my duties today. I am concerned. I had not known one to go off to war 'til this point, and certainly not a member of my family. Charles did give quite a motivating lecture yesterday.

Tuesday, June 5, 1917

Mail call was most pleasant today. Received a formal invitation from Mr. Ebersole. We (Steven, William and Charles also received one) have been invited to sail with the family on Lake Champlain this coming Sunday. We will look forward to the outing with great expectation.

This afternoon, we sat before the blackboard to study the finer points of contouring. Map making will be very useful during trenching and warfare. It is vital to the placement of troops if one knows the land. The making of strategies is guided by the contours of the land.

Sunday, June 10, 1917

After church services at the club, the four of us climbed into Charles' car and drove to the dock where we were to meet the Ebersoles. It proved a very enjoyable day. Mr. Ebersole suggested we may find training much more to our liking if we can devote at least one day a month away from the camp. We agreed heartily. Next month we will do the same, weather permitting.

Sunday, June 24, 1917

Yesterday, a monstrous day, we spent hiking fifteen miles in the rain. The wind howled adding great motivation in completing this journey as quickly as possible. Two men slid down an embankment, one broke his ankle, the other his wrist. Counting all companies, some 46 men were injured

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during the hike. The club cancelled the entertainment for the evening. It was just as well. I had to catch up with my journal and much reading.

Tuesday, June 26, 1917

Today was another special occasion. We had thirteen French Birdmen arrive to instruct the candidates in aviation. However, only two spoke English. A request was sent through the camp for those who spoke fluent French to report to the Camp Commander's office. Living on the Canadian border for most of my life, I had learned quite a bit of French. I had also studied the language in college. I went to the commander's office. Only fifteen persons knew enough French to interpret the techniques of aviation. Fortunately, I was one. I befriended a chap by the name of Jean-Pierre Ratoulle. I was even taken up in the aeroplane. Quite a thrill! I hope aviation will become a field in which I may excel. It was a thrilling day for the whole camp and Plattsburgh. Photos were taken while in the air. The extensive trenches we dug made quite an impression on the regular officers.

Wednesday, July 4, 1917

This day came upon us rather quickly. We put on a parade for the townspeople. Afterwards, several sports events took place. Our company took the blue ribbon in all but one event. And even then we

did well, and placed second. Who says the Thirteenth is unlucky? We then were able to mingle with the crowd. The Ebersoles had packed a large, magnificent picnic luncheon. The four of us company boys were invited to share this feast, the best food we had tasted since we sailed the lake. Martha and I have made our feelings clear to each other. I shall ask her father upon graduation day for her hand in marriage.

Tuesday, July 10, 1917

Today, we learned the correct placement of cannons, various artillery pieces and most of all, the importance of strategy. We will practice these throughout the next three weeks, as well as the items we have learned in the past two months. We will put these all to good use in a campwide maneuver to last one week. This maneuver will occur the week before graduation.

Tuesday, July 31, 1917

I was called to Colonel Smith's office today. I had no idea why. He immediately dismissed his aides upon my arrival and invited me to sit down. My brother Charles has been declared killed in battle in France. He regretted giving me this news. He said my brother died a hero, he had saved the lives of six of his troops.

Saturday, August 4, 1917

Today, we reviewed tactics for the upcoming maneuver. We will flank the lower river (Saranac) and hold the area as best we can. This information is to be kept amongst ourselves, however, the information is known all over camp. Charles Harrison is planning to have audience with Capt. Eagel to discuss this matter. He hopes to convince the Capt. to change strategies and to overwhelm the other companies with our knowledge of battle strategies and maneuvers.

Sunday, August 5, 1917

Charles, Steven, William and I were called to Capt. Eagel's office. We were requested to miss church services today to further plan our success in the upcoming event. It appears the 'old man' believes this move will aid us in maintaining the number one position.

Monday, August 6, 1917

We gathered our gear together this morning before mess. At mess, the whole company ate in silence. After mess, we began our long march to the Saranac River Maneuver Area, southwest of the camp. This gave the appearance of following our original plans. Fortunately, Rory secured additional pup tents as decoy bait. We set up camp as scheduled and cleared out. We headed north, circling the outer perimeters of the camp maneuver fields. The maps Steven had made in the past came in useful. We then returned one by one to the training camp barracks and slept for 2 hours.

These movements took us past sunset. We would act in the dark of night.

Tuesday, August 7, 1917

During the night, we forced two companies to retreat. Another company surrendered, which meant they had to return to their barracks. We have not yet been discovered in the main camp area though the possibility increases with each passing hour. We hope our luck will hold.

Wednesday, August 8, 1917

Once again, we have been silent during the day. We ate camp rations supplied by Romer and his charm with the mess cook. It is my belief, he cajoled the mess cook into delivering the goods on behalf of Colonel Wolfe. Romer scoffed and said "All's fair in love and war", when we questioned him over his good fortune.

Rory had somehow gotten all the names and placements of the companies who were using the trenches. During the dark hours of night (again) we went to work. We infiltrated the trenches. When asked our names, we gave those of the members in the enemy's company. That is, after we'd bound and gagged each 'til we came to the end of the trench.

Thursday, August 9, 1917

Today, we came out in the light of day. Although we ended up with several wounded, our artillery was stronger than the opposing company. We had to ford the Saranac and flee to safety at one point. We regrouped and attacked again.

Friday, August 10, 1917

Today was the last of the war games. We did force the majority of the companies to retreat. However, they joined together, and in the end, wiped out our entire company. Thank goodness this is only a game and a learning experience.

Saturday, August 11, 1917

We gathered on the parade field today to hear the results of the maneuvers. Colonel Wolfe was pleased with the manner in which each company put to use its strategies and tactics. Special mention was made of our company. The Colonel stated he was pleased with our unusual strategy. It proved we had learned a great deal at camp. He hoped the other companies learned always to expect the unexpected. He expounded by saying although we did not accomplish a complete win, our activities would have enabled other companies on our side in a war situation to have had an advantage. So, in truth, the Platt Trophy would land in the barracks of the Thirteenth.

Monday, August 13, 1917

Today, we reviewed most of what we have learned in the last three months. Cavalry, artillery, aviation, drill, military regulations. You name it, we touched upon it. We will be given our assignments tomorrow. Wednesday morning we will be commissioned.

Tuesday, August 14,1917

I will be assigned here to aid with next training camp. Charles will also stay on. Steven and William will both go to Europe. The assignments in our company are diverse. We shall serve throughout the world.

My parents are arriving on this afternoon's train. I shall meet with Martha first. Together we shall greet my parents.

I have found my niche in life. The Army has strengthened my weaknesses, tempered my strengths, and filled me with a desire to preserve my country's freedom. Here we have the choice to serve and the men do so without waiting for a draft call. The women support the men wholeheartedly and even the children become participants. It is this freedom I, and those who serve with me, choose to protect.

Mother and Father were invited to stay with the Ebersoles. After giving them a tour of the encampment, we had dinner at the mess. Mother declared the food was not as bad as she had heard. Upon leaving the camp with Martha and her family, my parents both turned and whispered their best on my lady friend Martha. They both found her pleasing.

Wednesday, August 15, 1917

This morning began as normal with reveille. We rushed through mess and returned to put the last touches on our uniforms.

While I stood on the parade field, the life at camp passed before me. I enjoyed it here as a candidate. I had made friends here that I will have forever. I will treasure these days always. This is rather sentimental, however, the comradery formed here will endure the worst and always bloom as the perennial. My name was called, I felt the tears come to my eyes. There they stayed. I saw brother Charles flash before me. He gave me the thumbs up.

After the ceremonies, all officers were dismissed. I ran to the area in which my parents and the Ebersoles had been sitting. I planned to ask Mr. Ebersole for Martha's hand. Steven, William and Charles had the same hopes. He precluded us all by suggesting we should all prepare for four weddings. This has been a remarkable day in my life.

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Rev. Francis B. Hall and the Peristrome Church

Phyllis L. Wells

The Peristrome Presbyterian Church of Plattsburgh, New York was organized in 1864 by the Rev. Francis Bloodgood Hall and fifty-five members as a result of disagreement on doctrinal matters and pew rentals among the members of the First Presbyterian Church of Plattsburgh. The Peristrome Church Society built a small brick building on the southeast corner of Brinkerhoff and Oak streets. Reverend Hall, their only pastor, served without pay and without charging fees. He and his wife, Frances Delord Webb, the grand-daughter of Henry Delord, lived in the house now known as the Kent-Delord House. After the pastor's death in 1903 the church was closed, the members, for the most part, returning to the First Church.

THE CONFLICT

Doctrinal and philosophical differences led to the formation of the Peristrome church. This growing and continuous dissension among the members beginning quite early in the 19th century, propelled them finally to separation. They questioned the tradition of censure by, and confession before, the Session for offenses; they questioned the authority of the Session to read the censure publicly before the congregation; they disapproved of the Session's heavy emphasis on conformity and control of the congregation, and they objected to the rental of the pews and to the use of wine for communion.

In the First Presbyterian Church censure was a common practice. The Session Minutes give many examples of offenses and censures. Among those offenses for which members were cited were keeping loose company, using profane language, drinking to intoxication, receiving baptism from a Catholic priest, neglecting public worship, speaking to injure the church, gambling and forgery, and having improper intercourse with females at unseasonable hours of the night!

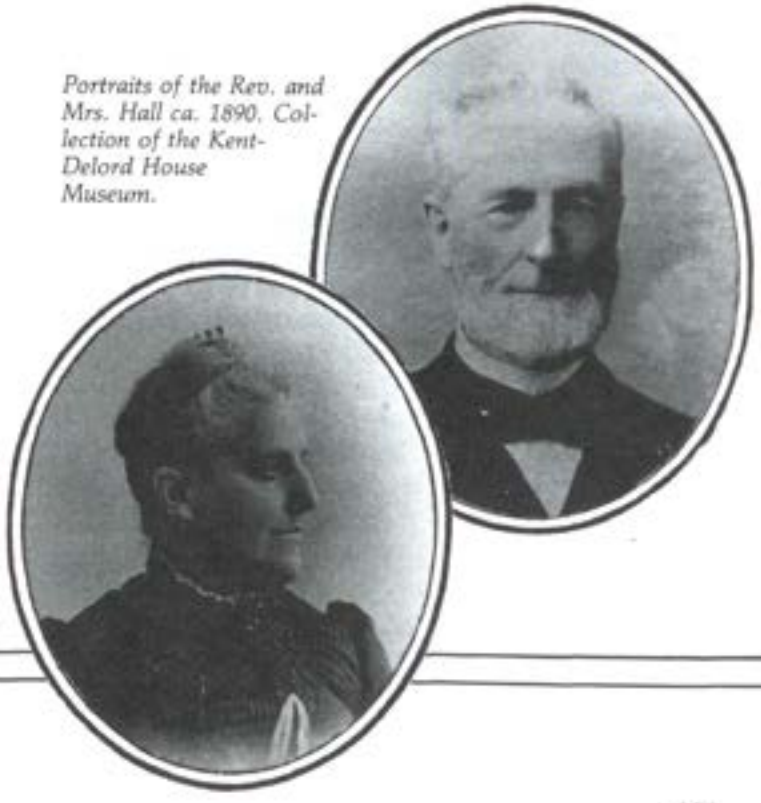
For example, April, 1835, the Session was informed that Moss Kent Platt, on the advice of his father, Elder William Pitt Platt, had taken the stage for New York City on a Sunday, an unjustifiable breach of the Sabbath. Mr. Platt wanted to complete his business and return to Plattsburgh before his wife's confinement. The next stage to New York was not to leave for several days.

Both father and son agreed to a confession drawn up by the pastor, Moses Chase. Elder Platt was to read the confession after the next Preparatory Lecture which preceded communion. He refused to read the prepared one, but instead read the one which he had drawn up.

> "If the church would not accept of that he would leave the church, his son would leave it and others would. That the day had come that would decide the destiny of the church—if they would hear him read that, the church would be prospered, if not, it would be broken to pieces."

Eventually, both confessions were read. During the discussion before the church, Elder Platt denied the authority of the Session to call him to account while he stood before the congregation, and treated their opinion with contempt. He was highly excited, and exhibited a very "unbecoming spirit" for an aged elder.

The incident caused disagreement among the members of the church. Some censured the pastor for his handling of the affair. The Session, however, drew up a resolution in which they stated that Rev. Chase indeed conducted the hearings "in accordance with the rules of the gospel."



Portraits of the Rev. and Mrs. Hall ca. 1890. Collection of the Kent-Delord House Museum.

As a consequence of this and other disturbing incidents, the Rev. Moses Chase resigned in April of 1835.

In the same month the Session passed three resolutions designed to restrict further the behavior of members. The first resolution forbade members of the congregation from attending parties, because they were considered to be a waste of time and money, injurious to the cause of religion, and partaking too much of the world. The second prohibited members from attending dancing schools or assemblies. The third demanded a more strict observance of the Sabbath. Forbidden were worldly conversation, domestic and agricultural pursuits, the employment of servants and hired help, travelling on business or pleasure, visiting and giving invitations, and going to the post office for papers and letters. These frequent and continuous challenges between the power of the Session and the temper of the congregation proceeded throughout the first half of the century, with, in addition, frequent changes of ministers, underlining the discord within the membership.

With the resignation in January, 1863 of the Rev. John R. Young the church was again without pastoral, leadership. Soon after, Reverend Hall, who was serving as a chaplain in Virginia with the Northern armies, and whose wife was already residing in Plattsburgh, was to go into battle and would not be mustered out until May. Hall felt he must stay with them until that time. He began a four month, temporary association with the church on July 5, 1863.

His initial pastorate with the First Church lasted only four months, after which he went to Hartford, Connecticut. Perhaps he hoped that the Presbyterians would settle their differences in his absence. Further attempts to hold the congregation together were initiated by The First Church presenting a call to Rev. Hall in January of 1864.

The breakup of the First Presbyterian Church actually took place on January 31, 1864. Reverend Hall's letter was received in which he declined to preach at First Church. A request from fifty-five members of First Church had been received a week previously, asking for dismission from the First Church to another about to be formed, the Second Presbyterian Church of Plattsburgh. This latter request was granted. The Peristrome Presbyterian Church was organized the very next day.

THE RESOLUTION

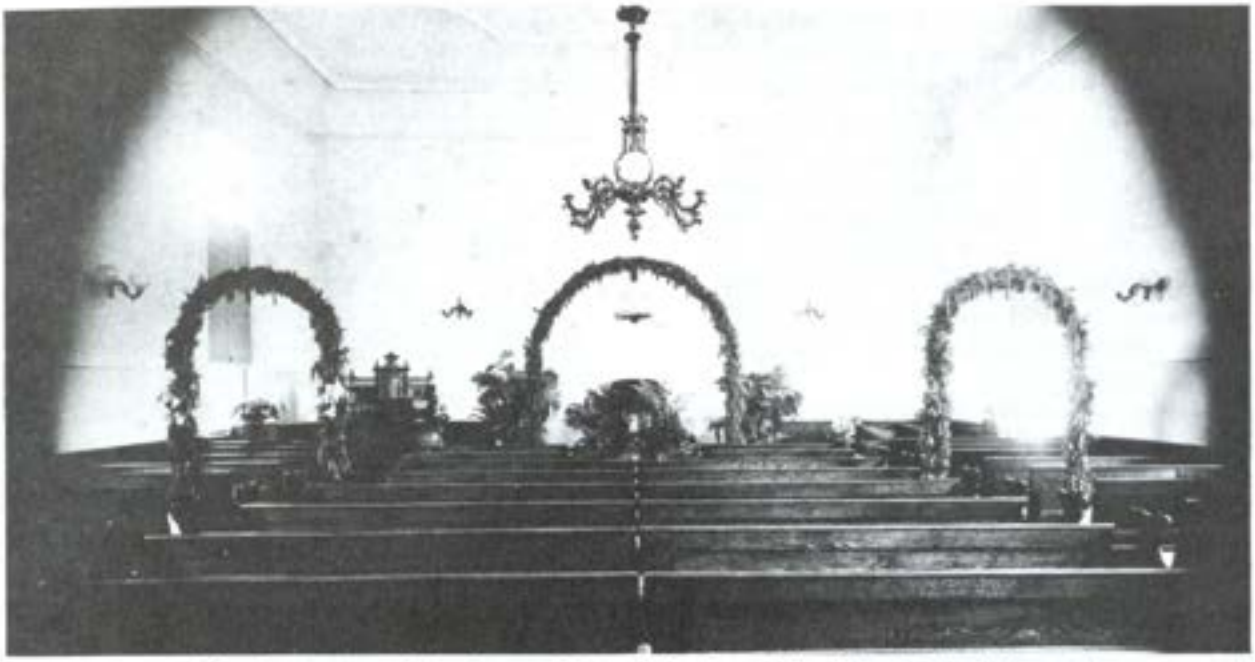
A meeting was held on February 24, 1864 at the home of Moses Rice Wood to organize the new church. The others present were Gilman Breed, Mary Hall Wood, Orissa Amelia Wood, and the Reverend Francis B. Hall. Wood and Breed were elected as the Session, with Breed as the clerk. Hall, as pastor, was the moderator. These people... "did by profession of their faith in the presence of one another and by the selection of Elders organize themselves into a church called the Peristrome Presbyterian Church of Plattsburgh."

The meaning of the name Peristrome was a matter for speculation in the local papers. It was concluded that it came from the Greek, "peristronium," meaning to spread around. This probably signified the church's desire to spread its influence among the people.

In organizing the Peristrome Church, Hall did not intend to break with Presbyterian tradition. Two of the questions asked of persons seeking membership in his church illustrate this. The first made clear that the members of the church were convenanted together in a church relation, giving their full assent to the validity and acceptability of the acknowledged doctrines and order of the Presbyterian Church. The second asks if the doctrines of scripture, as set forth in the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church and in the Westminster Assembly, are in accordance with the individual's views.

A notice in the local paper on February 25 announced that the Peristrome Presbyterian Church of Plattsburgh would, until erection of their chapel or until further notice, meet for public worship at Norton's Hall. Sabbath services were at 10:30 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., with the Sabbath School following the morning service. Prayer meeting was Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. followed by a teacher's meeting. The Prepatory Lecture for communion would be held Thursday at 7:00 p.m.

Some of the church's original members were Margaret Freligh Platt (Mrs. Moss Kent), Eliza Fouquet, Helen Janet Durkee, Mrs. Julia Nichols, Dr. Benjamin Mooers, Daniel D. Douglass, Christopher Cramer, and Elders Lawrence Myers, Cyrus Waterhouse, and Moss Kent Platt. Among the officers of the church at different times were Jacob Parmenter, Colonel Franklin Palmer, Charles Thomas, Michael Peter Myers, and William Wells Utting. The church property was to be held by the Board of Trustees.



Interior of the Peristrome Church ca. 1890. Collection of the Kent-Delord House Museum.

Session resolutions provided for the growing congregation. On October 23, 1864 it was resolved that the society should be incorporated, which was accomplished on December 13, 1864. The Session also resolved to work toward the building of their own church. On November 12, 1864 it was recommended that the Session be enlarged, and John William Bailey and Moss Kent Platt were elected as the additional members.

A committee was appointed on January 28, 1865 to find a suitable lot on which to build and on August 7, the committee recommended a $2000 lot on the southeast corner of Oak and Brinkerhoff Streets, owned by Benjamin J. Weaver. The report had been delayed because part of the committee felt they should search further, since this lot was so close to the First Presbyterian Church. No other suitable location was found, however, and the delay cost the church $900, as the price on the lot was raised in the interim.

Elders Gilman Breed, Moss Kent Platt, and John William Bailey were appointed to the Building Committee. Early in September 1865 the Session met with the builder, B.W. Haynes, to examine his drawings. Later in the month, J.R. Colby was hired to construct a plain brick building fifty-two feet long and thirty-six feet wide, with a height to the eaves of twenty-five feet. A large part of the $7153 building cost was borne by Reverend Hall, who had an independent income. Apparently the church was finished by July 1866, as this is the first mention that the Session met in the Peristrome Chapel.

A Session report of the first year of the church indicates that the number of baptized members was 135, while the number admitted to full membership was 66. Seventeen children were baptized, three marriages performed, and two communicants died. The Sabbath School numbered one hundred thirty.

FANNY AND FRANK

The life and activities of the church were distinctly influenced by the ideals and beliefs of the pastor and his wife. Both had a strong sense of what was right and proper, a strong commitment to helping the poor and needy, and a sincere wish to help all people who came within their influence. Mrs. Hall provided simple medical attention to those who could not afford it, and her husband helped as well.

Francis Bloodgood Hall was born on November 16, 1827 in New York City, the son of Major Nathaniel Nye Hall and Margaret Bloodgood Hall. He grew up in Hartford, Connecticut, where he knew the Webb family. He graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Union College in 1852. Soon after his theological training at Princeton Theological

Seminary where he graduated with honors in 1856, he was ordained by the Presbytery of Albany.

Within the same month Hall obtained a license and married Frances Delord Webb on May 14, 1856. Frances was born on February 11, 1834 in Albany, New York, the daughter of Frances Henrietta Delord and Henry Livingston Webb. Because her mother died soon after her birth and her father was actively engaged with his business, Frances was brought to Plattsburgh to live with her grandparents, William and Betsey Swetland, formerly Mrs. Henry Delord.

When she was four years old her father sent her to Hartford to live with her Aunts Eliza and Amelia Webb, for he felt that she was being spoiled and needed a more disciplined upbringing. After completing her secondary education Frances went to finishing school in Philadelphia in the fall of 1851. It was at this time that she met and fell in love with Francis Hall, though they did not become engaged until 1854.

Since both had private income, Francis Hall was not in a hurry to seek a pulpit and settle down. They spent a leisurely honeymoon in Europe from October 1856 through the summer of 1857. That fall Reverend Hall obtained a parish in the Presbyterian Church at Luzerne, New York. In October 1862 he was nominated for chaplain of the Sixteenth New York Volunteers, to which job he reported in December of that year.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Hall came to Plattsburgh to help her aging grandparents. She remained here while her husband served in the Union Army. On May 3, 1863 he distinguished himself by rescuing wounded soldiers under fire during a battle at Salem Heights, Virginia. In 1896 he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his bravery.

Relations with the First Presbyterian Church were cordial, although Hall remained firm where matters of principle were concerned. After the fire of August 21, 1867 which destroyed the First Church, he sent a letter to the pastor, Reverend Ed-

Peristrome Church ca. 1900. Collection of Kent-Delord House Museum.

win A. Bulkley, offering the use of the Peristrome Chapel for their services. Bulkley declined, but wrote the Peristrome Church inviting them to a conference to discuss the consolidation and union of the two churches. The Peristrome Church declined this invitation.

Mr. Hall was often engaged in helping the sick and poor. During the smallpox epidemic of 1873 he worked with Father James Maloney of St. John's Church to aid and comfort the afflicted and bury the dead. Hall fitted up apartments on Durkee Street as a pesthouse, and took the utmost sanitary precautions to guard against the possibility of communicating the disease when he visited the people housed there.

As a member of the Prison Association of New York, Hall visited jails to make reports, but visited the local jail most often, helping to rehabilitate its inmates. He was also a member of the State Board of Charities, and frequently visited the County Poorhouse. For many years he went to the local barracks to conduct weekly services and to counsel individual soldiers. He was an ardent advocate and supporter of the temperance movement.

Reverend Hall carried on all of his activities until two weeks before his death, Sunday, October 4, 1903. He died of bronchial pneumonia, at age seventy-six. The body was escorted from his home to the church by Company D of the United States Fifth Infantry, accompanied by the Infantry Band. The Peristrome Church was too small to hold the many who gathered to pay their last respects to "a faithful pastor, a steadfast comrade, a good citizen, and a devoted friend." Burial was in Riverside Cemetery, Plattsburgh.

THE RETURN

Charles Thomas and Franklin Palmer, trustees of the Peristrome Church, called a meeting of the congregation on November 29, 1903 to determine the views and desires of the members concerning the future of the church. Shortly thereafter it was announced in the papers that the church was closed. Hall had anticipated this action by willing that his church be sold and the proceeds distributed to charity.

The work of the church was distinctly Reverend Hall's life work, and its closing was a tribute to him. The newspaper said "Where could one be found to carry it on after his departure?"

The Session of the First Presbyterian Church immediately sent a letter of sympathy and an offer of assistance to the Peristrome Church. In November the Session invited the members of the Peristrome Church, along with their Sabbath School and the Christian Endeavor, to transfer to First Church. The letter was received "with happy result." Over the next two years many of the Peristrome Church's members did transfer to First Church, including Mrs. Frances D. Hall. Time had healed earlier wounds.

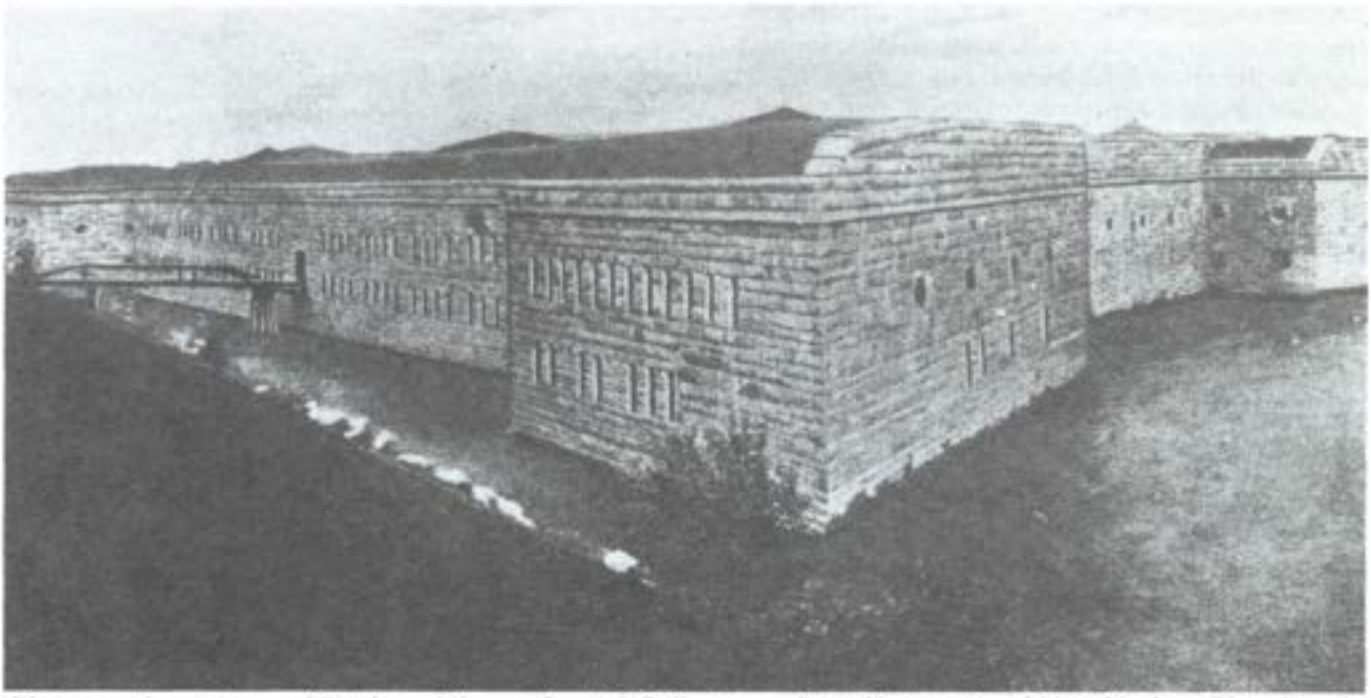
First Presbyterian Church, Plattsburgh, New York. ca. 1860. Photograph courtesy of Feinberg Library Special Collections, SUNY/Plattsburgh.

Frances D. Hall, Reverend Hall's widow, continued to maintain the social position of her family and home and was active in charities, prison, church, and temperance work. She also organized the Cumberland Bay Works to manufacture Fanoline, a healing salve. Mrs. Hall's death occurred on October 4, 1913, exactly ten years after that of her husband.

The Reverend Francis B. Hall and his Peristrome Presbyterian Church existed in Plattsburgh for nearly forty years. He adhered to his principles throughout his life and contributed a great deal both of himself and his means to the work of the church and to the aid of humanity in need.

A single paragraph in the announcement of the closing of the Peristrome church succinctly sums up Hall's life work.

"We can but deplore the fact that a single standard lifted against sin and evil in this city should be removed by the closing of this church, but let us hope that the wide-spread influence it has had in the promotion of pure religion may not be forgotten."



Photograph courtesy of Feinberg Library Special Collections, State University of New York at Plattsburgh.

FORT MONTGOMERY
A SHORT HISTORY

John F. Ross

Lake Champlain and the Richelieu River are known as "The Warpath of the Nations," because it was for more than 200 years the route of attack and counter-attack of the Indians of eastern North America and of the European nations that contended for supremacy in this continent.

Their military expeditions all moved by water over the lake and river. Had the narrow exit of Lake Champlain into the Richelieu been controlled by shore forts, as was sometimes suggested, the naval engagements of the Revolution and of the War of 1812 might never have been fought. However, the suggestions were ignored until after the close of the War of 1812, when in 1816 the United States began construction of a "fort or castle" on the west bank of the Richelieu at Island Point north of Rouses Point and just south of the international boundary.

On November 1, 1816, a contract was signed at Rouses Point by Joseph G. Totten for the United States with contractors Stewart, McMartin, and McIntyre, for the erection of a fort that later was to become famous as "Fort Blunder, the only fort ever erected on foreign soil by the United States."

Construction of the fort went forward during the summer of 1817 and 1818 and was discontinued early in 1819 with the announcement of the report of a boundary survey team that the site of construction was north of the 45th parallel. It was after this announcement that some wit christened the fort as "Fort Blunder."

Under the terms of the Treaty of Ghent, signed at the close of the war of 1812, the boundary survey was to be conducted only where the boundary line had not been previously surveyed and monumented. As the line had been surveyed and monumented where it crossed the Richelieu, the surveyors were not authorized by the Treaty of Ghent to make a resurvey. However, they did resurvey the already monumented line and were correct in their determination that the fort was being built north of the 45th parallel.

In 1836 the United States began planning the erection of two forts south of the 45th parallel, one on Stoney Point on the west shore, the other at Wind-

mill Point on the east shore. The guns of these forts would control entry to Lake Champlain from the Richelieu across a channel much wider than that at Island Point, about a mile to the north where the entire channel could be raked by fire from one battery.

Construction at Stoney Point and Windmill Point had not begun when the Webster-Ashburton Treaty of 1842 was signed and all proposals for such construction were dropped, inasmuch as the treaty provided that Island Point was again within the boundaries of the United States. On July 13, 1844, the United States began construction of a fort at Island Point.

In the years between 1819 and 1844 the original fort at Island Point had fallen into ruin from the attacks of the elements and of the residents of the area who carted away most of the stone, brick, and iron for use in building structures of their own. By 1844 barely a trace of "Fort Blunder" remained.

The construction that began in 1844 was new from the ground up. In fact, it was new from the ground down, for hundreds of "spiles" were driven into the sands of Island Point to provide a foundation for the new fortification that was named Fort Montgomery in honor of the American general who lost his life during the attack on Quebec. The new works were to be octagonal in shape and would enclose about one acre in area, suitable for a garrison of 800 men. Work on Fort Montgomery went forward slowly until the outbreak of the Civil War, when construction was accelerated.

During the Civil War work was rushed on Fort Montgomery under the direction of Captain David White, a resident of Rouses Point and a descendant of Jacques Rouse, the village's first permanent white settler. Guns were mounted in the north face of the fort, which had been raised as quickly as possible to protect against raids down the Richelieu by Confederate sympathizers known to be assembled in Montreal.

The last heavy construction on the fort ended about 1872 with the fort essentially complete and all guns installed. It was never garrisoned, however, and the guns were removed early in 1900. A caretaker remained in charge until about 1920 when all supervision by the War Department ceased. Then vandals began their assaults and removed or destroyed much of the interior of the fort.

Some ten years later the fort and the lands of the military reservation about it were sold to the contractor constructing the bridge between Rouses Point and Alburg aross Lake Champlain who used stone from the fort for rip-rap on the causeway approaching the bridge. Approximately one-half of the outer walls of the fort were destroyed and the remainder left in ruins that may be seen today by travellers crossing on the interstate bridge between Vermont and New York.

Neither fort was ever garrisoned. Neither fort ever fired a gun in defense of the United States. "Fort Blunder" became, and remains famous in the military annals of the United States, as did its designer and builder, General Joseph G. Totten.

F·U·R·T·H·E·R R·E·A·D·I·N·G

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