

PRESERVE THE PAST FOR THE FUTURE

# CLINTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



April 2014

## VISIT CLINTON IN THE 1940s & 1950s

Join us Sunday, April 13th for the rundown on Clinton back in the late 1940s and 1950s. Who better to tell the tales and the amusing incidents than David Sinclair. Dave grew up on Williams Street and graduated from Clinton High School. After training and graduating from Syracuse University in architecture, he switched careers and retired as a Syracuse fireman.

While in high school Dave worked at Hogan's store, Burns' grocery, and the A & P. All three have left the scene, but many memories remain. Dave was a keen observer of the Clinton of 60-70 years ago and has a fantastic memory to bring out these reminiscences in a vivid and humorous manner. He will relate his memories of a young man about town, the stores, the people, parades, houses and streets, wars, and his family history.

Refreshments will follow the 2 PM program at 1 Fountain Street.



### AT LEFT

Clinton mechanic Gene Oliver collected vintage cars including a rare 1914 Moyer made in Syracuse. He also owned this 1931 Pierce-Arrow two seater plus rumble seat. It is pictured last fall in front of Brownie Rugs on McBride Avenue. The Brown brothers are the current owners.

Clinton Historical Society  
Founded in 1962

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Open Hours: Wednesday 1-4  
and Saturday 1-3

**Dues-** \$10.00 individual;  
\$15.00 families/businesses;  
\$25.00 friends; \$50.00 con-  
tributing

## **CLINTON'S BEGINNINGS 227 YEARS AGO**

In the fall of 1786 a party of Plymouth, Connecticut men, who were exploring the country in search of a suitable place of residence, came upon the present site of Clinton.

Here they determined to settle. One Ludim Blodgett commenced the building of a log cabin. However, it was impossible to start the settlement in the fall of the year so they returned from where they had come with the intention of coming back the following spring(1787).

Moses Foot (then without the "e") and his three sons, Bronson, Luther, and Ira, his son-in-law Barnabas Pond, Levi Sherman, Solomon Hovey, James Bronson, and Ludim Blodgett were the first settlers.

The Founders' Monument in the south end of the Park records this event.

Moses Foot led the band of sturdy New Englanders here in the wilderness. He was tall, well-proportioned, and a man of remarkable courage at age 53. Foot had been a captain in two different Connecticut Regiments during the Revolutionary War. He died in 1819 and is buried in an unmarked grave in the Old Burying Ground at Kirkland and Norton avenues

The pioneers brought their stern Calvinist faith with them and held a religious service on April 8, 1787 within a few weeks of March 3, 1787, the date Clinton's settlement began.

Judge Othniel S. Williams in an 1847 lecture stated, "What in March was a wilderness, gloomy, sad, and cheerless, in October began to seem like home."

In 1788 about 20 more families came including Rev. Samuel Kirkland, George Langford, Timothy Tuttle, Benjamin Pollard, Zadoch Loomis, Theodore Manross, Andrew Blanchard, Silas Austen, Joshua Morse, Elis Dewey, and Joseph Gleason.

Foot and the others assumed they were "squatters" on land they could claim by preemption right. To their surprise they found lines on marked trees indicating an earlier survey.

After further inquiry they learned that they had settled on Coxe's Patent, a tract of land granted by the colony of New York on May 30, 1770 to Daniel Coxe, William Coxe, Rebecca Coxe, and John Tabor Kempe and his wife, Grace.

This area was in a tract of 2016 acres bounded on the west by the Oriskany Creek and was in the 6<sup>th</sup> Division of Coxe's Patent. Hence, Foot traveled to Philadelphia to purchase the whole tract for ten schillings per acre.

This he did and then parceled out the lots at cost among the various settlers.

This area was in the Town of Whitestown in Montgomery County in 1787. Herkimer County was taken from Montgomery in 1792. After 1792 we were in the Town of Paris, and Oneida County was formed in 1798. Finally the Town of Kirkland was taken from Paris in 1827.

Kirkland received its name, of course, from missionary to the Oneidas, Samuel Kirkland, who also started the Hamilton-Oneida Academy in 1793. In 1812 the Academy became Hamilton College.

However, Moses Foot and the others had closer Indian neighbors than the Oneidas. In 1784-5 remnants of seven tribes from Connecticut and Long Island, called the Brothertown Indians, were given lands by New York State and the Oneida Indians.

The Brothertown Patent extended from near the intersection of Dwight Avenue and Meadow Street south to today's Deansboro and Waterville area. By 1800 a few hundred Brothertown Indians settled, but lost their lands to encroaching whites by the mid-1820's and moved to Wisconsin along with the Oneidas and Stockbridge Indians who had settled near Munnsville in the Stockbridge Valley.

Our early pioneers from Connecticut started our community with faith in God, faith in hard work, and faith in themselves to succeed in the unfriendly wilderness.

From that inauspicious beginning Clinton and Kirkland have grown to a population of 10,000 people. The community has a public school system, a liberal arts college, restaurants, two ice arenas, a variety of homes, a few farms, retail outlets, churches, and social and cultural organizations to occupy all ages and interests.

## BARNs AND FARMS REPRINTED

In 2008 the Society sponsored the book on *Barns and Farms of Kirkland, New York*. Recently the last copy was bought so more have been printed by the Hamilton College Print shop and are available at the society for \$25.00.

## FREDERICK BEE BORN HERE IN 1825

Born here in September 1825 when his parents lived on South Park Row Frederick Bee became an attorney, entrepreneur, and diplomat who was heavily involved in civil rights for Chinese immigrants to the USA in the 1870 and 1880s.

His father John Bee owned the land from Alteri's restaurant to Fountain Street in the 1820s. John was a tailor and was active in the Masons. John, his wife Elizabeth, and son John, Jr. are all buried in the Old Burying Ground.

Frederick Bee moved to California with his brother Albert and became successful in gold mining, railroads, a telegraph line, railroads, and a steamship line.

Later in the late 1870s Bee got involved with defending Chinese immigrant interests. He was hired by the Chinese government to seek redress and reparations for the Chinese immigrants. Bee is remembered for his fight for civil rights for Chinese immigrants at a time when they had few allies. Bee died in 1897. Check out the web site "Frederickbee.com."



## DUES ARE DUE

Enclosed with the March Newsletter was the dues notice for the April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015 year. Members are encouraged to join at a higher tier and to make extra donations as well.

Dues is the major source of income so your prompt remittance is welcome. Use the envelope enclosed with the March Newsletter.

## FAMILY TREES WANTED

With the popularity of various Internet sources, researching one's family tree has become a bit easier than years ago. Send the Society copies of your genealogy for the Munson Library so others may do research.

The Society gratefully acknowledges Hamilton College for printing this newsletter; this has been happening for years and is a fine example of cooperation between the college and the village.

- 7 The below view of Lombard Memorial Town Hall, East Park Row, and Utica Street is one never seen. That is unless you are atop the Clinton Fire Department's Tower 5 parked in front of fire house # 1 on North Park Row. This picture was taken by fireman Tim Zimble in April 2013.



## PRESIDENT'S LETTER TO YOU

This has been another good month at the Society. We have been very busy with research requests and have helped people from New York and California with questions on our "Political Equality Club" archives. The "Political Equality Club" was active in the area in the early 20th century pursuing equal rights for women.

Historians working with our women's equality collection have told us it is the best and most definitive collection they have ever seen. One person drove in from New York City to review it. Another researcher from Ohio stopped in the other day to do research on the Ellinwood family. An author stopped in to review our collection of pictures of Clinton Comets players for his new book. When we are open on Wednesday and Saturday you never know who is going to come through the door to ask a question or donate an item to our collection. We also get numerous questions via email and land mail.

We are also compiling a listing of World War I veterans from the area and have identified 160 men from the area who left to "make the world safe for democracy". Do you have relatives who were in World War I? We would be proud to share our information with you. World War I started 100 years ago!

Stop in and see us sometime! Check us out on Facebook to get the latest news releases and see the historic photos we post - we have 375 people following Clinton Historical Society.

*Bob Tegart*

