

CLINTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER MARCH 2008

P.O. Box 42
Clinton, New York 13323

MARLENE BROWN PRESENTS THE CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

For years we've heard about the **Children's Museum in Utica**, but most probably have not visited. Museum Executive Director Marlene Brown will tell us the whole story on Sunday, March 9 starting at 2 PM at the Society at 1 Fountain Street.

Marlene grew up on Brimfield Street, one of Robert Burrows' daughters, and is related to one of the oldest families on the street, the Marshes, who came from Brimfield, Massachusetts in 1790.

So, enjoy a Sunday afternoon with us learning ALL about an important institution for young people in this area, the Children's Museum. Refreshments will follow the program. Park free across the street in the village parking lot.

CALLING ALL CLINTON GRADS

The Clinton School Alumni Association has asked us to announce to our members the **ALL-CLASS REUNION** set for July 4 and 5, 2008. A parade, band concert, memorabilia display, and a gathering at the Clinton Arena are being planned. Details will be mailed soon to all alumni.

The last all-class reunion was held July 2,3,4, 2004. The Clinton Historical Society will hold special events for Clinton alumni during the July 4-5 period, too.

The Society's **Historic Clinton Week** will be June 29 to July 5 this year.

CLINTON 221 YEARS OLD

March 3, 1787 saw the beginnings of Clinton when Moses Foot(e) and seven other families first settled. SO, we're **221** years old right now!!!!

The Founders' Monument in the south end of the Park commemorates this event and was placed there around 1885.

Foot(e) had to purchase this land from descendants of Daniel Coxe whose family was granted this land by King George III in 1770.

Clinton is on the 6th Division of Coxe's Patent. Old maps label this area "Coxeborough" and "Carolana."

CLINTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Founded in 1962

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Former Clinton Baptist Church, built in 1832, at 1 Fountain Street

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HOURS- Wednesday 1-3
and Saturday 11-2

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BANQUET SET

The annual meeting and banquet of the CHS will take place on Wednesday, May 7, 2008 at the Skenandoa Club on Norton Avenue. **Save that date in your calendars.**

Election of officers and annual reports will be made. More on this in the April Newsletter.

CLARIFICATION

This is the second month in a row when a clarification needs to be made.

Francis Preston Blair, Jr. was Horatio Seymour's vice presidential running mate in 1868 against U.S. Grant of Ohio and Schuyler Colfax of Indiana.

Hence, the Seymour and Blair Union Guard Club in Clinton in 1868 was formed to promote their election that November. Blair hailed from Missouri, and his brother Montgomery was Lincoln's Postmaster General.

Blair had served with Union forces in the Civil War and opposed the Radical Republicans who sought to punish the South. Seymour was accused of being a "Copperhead." Seymour had a home in Utica, and Horatio Arterial is named after him.

NEW MEMBERS

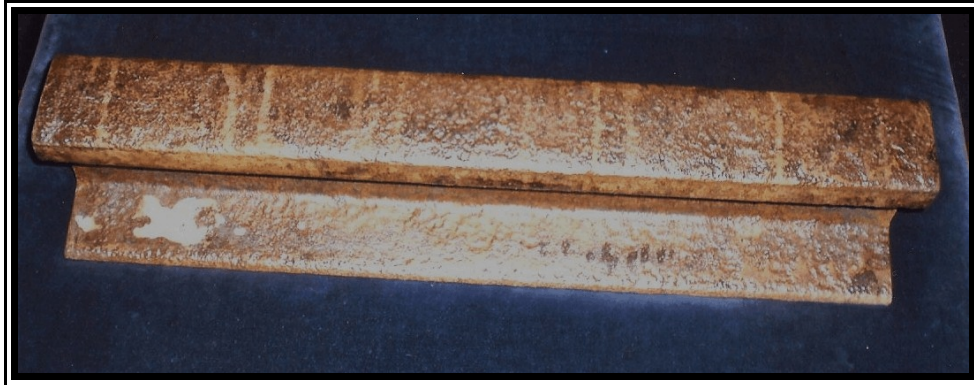
The CHS welcomes Arthur Baker, Warren Scoones, and Donald Howard to membership.

Dr. Baker now lives at the Lutheran Home, but was a former president of the New Hartford Historical Society. He is a NY O & W rail buff and has an interest in the iron ore mines behind the Lutheran Home.

Mr. Howard of Ormond Beach, Florida inquired about one of the founders of the Clinton Pharmaceutical Co. in 1887. In addition to William Bristol and John Myers, Luther F. Moore was a principal founder, too. Mr. Howard is writing an article about Mr. Moore for the Greene County Historical Society Newsletter. This firm became Bristol & Myers in 1890 and moved from Clinton to Syracuse. It is now Bristol-Myers-Squibb Co. The Bristols date from the early 1790's and are considered one of Clinton's pioneer families. Bristol Road, where some of them lived, is named after them.

Warren Scoones' family has been a prominent part of Clinton since the late 1800's and farmed on Kirkland Avenue until the 1960's. Warren is doing research on the Blunt, Scoones, and Schwaiger farms for the farm project.

UTICA TROLLEY RAIL DONATED



Mentioned in a recent Newsletter and pictured here is a 3' segment of a trolley rail taken from road construction on Utica Street near Stebbins Drive in 2004. The trolley went from Utica to

Clinton between 1901 and 1936 right up the middle of Utica Street from Stebbins Drive to the Park. Thanks to George and Jonathan Searles for this artifact from the past.

FROM MARSHALL TO MOSUL

Waterville Village Historian Flippa Brown sent the editor a message two years ago about a book just out by Gordon Taylor called *Fever & Thirst: An American Doctor Among the Tribes of Kurdistan, 1835-1844*. She suggested that I "google" Ashael Grant so I did and began to learn about this native of the Town of Marshall who became a missionary doctor and went to Kurdistan to care for the lost tribe of the Nestorians, remnants of the once great Nestorian Church.

To find Grant's birthplace drive south on Lumbar Road, then turn left on Austin Road, cross Maxwell Road, and keep driving south on Grant Hill Road. Asahel Grant was born in a farm house about 1/4 mile south of Maxwell Road on the east side of Grant Hill Road. The house has looked unoccupied in



recent years, but at the road side is a blue and gold historic marker set in 2001 by the Marshall Historical Society, thanks to Dorothy McConnell, president.

The marker reads: "Birthplace of Dr. Asahel Grant missionary-physician born August 17, 1807, died in Turkey April 24, 1844."

Grant had two wives and three sons, according to Marshall Town Historian McConnell. His first wife was Electa Spafford Loomis, and the second one was Judith Campbell. Both went with him to Kurdistan at different times. Son Seth was a librarian, and son Edwin lived in Washington, D.C.. Henry, the third son by the second wife Judith, was taken back to Iraq by Dr. Grant. Both wives died in Iraq and, we assume, are buried there. Grant's father William and mother Rachel Grant are both buried in Hanover Road Cemetery.

Dr. Grant went in October 1839 at age 32 to Turkey's Hakkari Province. Grant rode north from Mosul on the Tigris River, alone and unarmed, and entered the Hakkari mountains at a village called Duree just south of the Iraqi-Turkish border. Even mules were useless in the rugged terrain so Grant continued with porters and goat hair sandals, wearing the loose robes and pantaloons of the natives.

The next eight weeks were the high point of Grant's life as he discovered a wonderland of snow crusted peaks, rushing rivers, and terraced gardens. He met the Christian patriarch Mar Shimun and made plans for American schools. The Nestorians as well as the Kurds flocked to him to receive medical care.

Grant's mission was to bolster the Nestorian Christians against the Muslims, but mountain life was hard, intrigues abounded, and Grant was forever worried about his safety as the Kurdish emir plotted against the Nestorian patriarch.

Grant's presence was thought to be a preliminary to European conquest, and his motives were forever suspect. In 1843 the Kurds united forces and attacked three Christian tribes who had raided them. A massacre of 10,000 resulted, and Grant, helpless and discouraged, fled forever.

Grant died in Mosul a year later(1844). He was described as the "first American to fail in Iraq" by Taylor. Author Taylor managed, about four years ago, to contact the right people and with a group of Army MP's searched and found the cemetery in which Grant was buried in an unmarked grave.

Grant's life can be traced in Rev. A.C. Lathrop's *Memoir of Asahel Grant, M.D. Missionary to the Nestorians*, compiled at the request of his mother(Mrs. Rachel Grant), New York: M.W. Dodd, 1847. Grant published *The Nestorians, or the Lost tribes with Sketches of travel in Assyria, Armenia, Media, and Mesopotamia*, London and Boston, 1841

On the Internet "google" Grant, and you will be taken to Cornell University Library, www.famous.americans.net/asahelgrant, and hnn.us/articles/44830

PROGRAMS SOUGHT- if any members are aware of good local history programs for the CHS for the 2008-09 year, contact Frank Cittadino at 859-1055 or italyartist70@hotmail.com or our program chair Bill Rudge at 853-6300 or rudge44@aol.com

