TREASURES I HAVE FOUND IN OUR SOCIETY'S COLLECTIONS
(Printed Material)

Read before Chautauqua County Historical Society
October 4, 1952
TREASURES I HAVE FOUND IN OUR COLLECTIONS
(of PRINTED MATTER)

The topic on which I was asked to write is:
Treasures I have discovered in Our Collections"—meaning the Library
of this Society.

During the thrilling months of this year, while
our Historic Museum was being assembled and set up, and hundreds of
visitors expressed their surprise and admiration for the wealth of
objects which the Museum contains, I came little by little to feel
that the Society's Library was the Cinderella of the Society, with no
prospect of a Pumpkin Coach, or a Glass Slipper; that perhaps it
would be regarded, as one uninterested visitor said "Oh, this is only
the place where they keep the books."

Today in the topic assigned to me I am going
to try to prove to you that not all our valuable possessions are found
upstairs—in the kitchen—the Loom room—or even the Basement, fasci­
nating as these areas are.

The Dictionary defines TREASURE as "a thing of great
worth or value", and the Good Book says that where your Treasure is
there will your heart be also. So I hope that for a brief time
today, your hearts will be in the Library of our Historic Center, and
with me, you will feel that we have treasures indeed in our printed
records that show the lives and deaths, the joys and sorrows, the daily
experiences of those fine people, the Chautauqua County folk of the
era 1802 to 1952.

In an address made before the New York Historical
Association, a former New York State Historian, W.H. Paltsis, chose for
his topic: HISTORICAL SOCIETIES; THEIR WORK & WORTH. I quote several
excerpts; in some of them Mr. Paltsis himself quotes other authorities.

I quote—-"An Historical Society...should collect
all manner of archaeological, historical and genealogical material bearing
upon the particular territory which the Society seeks to represent.—
Diaries of original settlers...account books and...local newspapers should
be collected and preserved—- Into the Library are properly deposed
all manner of manuscripts, books, pamphlets, leaflets, broadsides...They
should be scientifically catalogued...—-A local society should
collect local printed documents...church records...genealogies of fami­
lies, personal biographies & reminiscences, etc.—-Pres. Hart of Harvard
said: "Sweep up the local and transient publications and put them where
the next generation will find them safe—-A chance ad., a quaintly
worded pamphlet may be of inestimable value to the modern historian.
The history of the common people is now what interests us most—how John
And Mary of old lived in their wayside cottage."
Using those quotations as a criterion, I can say unhesitatingly that the collection of printed books, pamphlets, pictures, folders, manuscripts, and loose pieces, made during the years the Chautauqua County Historical Society has been functioning would fall into all the categories mentioned, and when the mass of unbound material is sorted and filed I have no doubt that many more treasures than I can mention today, will be discovered.

First of all I speak of the treasures of actual Chautauqua County history. So far as I am able to ascertain, the society possesses a copy of practically every such history ever written. We have each of the following;—Young's fine History based upon the papers, documents and notes collected by Judge Elial T. Foote in his many years of research—Next in order of publication, the splendid History of Chautauqua County whose editor and chief author was the Hon. Obed Edson. Third I will mention the attractive 2-volume Centennial History of Chautauqua County which was the direct result & fruit of the Chautauqua County Historical Society's sponsoring of the Centennial of Chautauqua County in 1902, and which is, in fact, largely made up of the excellent material supplied by, and the addresses made by members of this Society during the Centennial celebration. This Society has a right to be proud of this work, and proud to own it.—Our next Chautauqua County history is the 3-volume work published soon after World War I, published by the American Historical Society. It is unusual in that two of its volumes are entirely given over to biographical sketches of Chautauqua County people. Volume 1 is of particular interest as it is filled with special articles, each one written by a person chosen for his or her knowledge of the subject presented.

You will be pleased to know that we have received only a few weeks ago, from Mr. Burdette Phillips the Charming "Miniature History of Chaut. County", compiled by Mr. Phillips himself for the Chautauqua Society of New York City; and also a Register of the members of that Society, all of whom were from Chautauqua County. In this Register are found the names, many photographs, and what is more, biographical sketches of the members. I venture to say that it would be very difficult to find copies of these works, or the material they contain. They are truly rare.

I am mentioning last the earliest histories of the County, because on account of their rarity they are especially precious. The first one is the tiny one by Warren, published in 1849. Its great value lies in the fact that the early events in our County's history were set down by a man who lived and experienced them. We are so fortunate as to have two copies. The last one I will mention, the knowledge of which will I hope delight you as it does me. In 1843 Hon. Samuel A. Brown, of Jamestown, one of our fine pioneers, delivered at the old Jamestown Academy a series of lectures which he called the EARLY HISTORY OF CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY. This was never published in book form. Through the interest and cooperation of Mr. John F. Jones of
and the very great interest of the venerable Mr. Charles H. Brown grandson of the author, our Society Library has received from Mr. Brown a complete copy of this History in typed manuscript form, a treasure indeed. Mr. Charles Brown also gave one copy of the Warren History; and a large number of very old books all of them of interest in this County. Among them is Howe's Historical Collections of New York which contains an illustration of our new Historic Center in Westfield, dated 1835, and other illustrations of places in the county.

We may regard among our treasures also, the two old Atlases of Chautauqua County, the 1867 One by Stewart, and the 1881 copy by Beers; and the Chautauqua County Gazetteer and Business Directory of 1873-74, all of them with a surprising amount of historical data. We have besides many other books and pamphlets dealing with individual communities in the County. There is only one Chautauqua County History we do not have, the 3-volume work on Chautauqua, Cattaraugus, and Allegany Counties, ed. by William J. Doty. This also is a fine work, and I hope someone may present a copy to our Library.

We have what might be called a veritable treasure trove in the several collections which have been assembled by outstanding Chautauqua County men and which through them or their families have become a part of our Library.

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1st. the FOOTE COLLECTION. Probably everyone in my audience knows about Judge Foote. Judge--Member of the Legislature--Postmaster, and a man of many other interests; but primarily the man who was the earliest in Chautauqua County to send the value of recording and preserving local history. For two-score years he wrote, collected and assembled a wealth of original documents, memoranda and facts, from which he intended to write, himself, a History of Chautauqua County. When he found that he was no longer physically able to this undertaking, he made the material available to another to use, and from this treasure of material, Andrew N. Young wrote his History of Chaut County. However as a great addition to this volume, Judge Foote's grandson presented to this Society more than 20 of his scrapbooks, containing priceless store of historical, political, biographical and other material, much of it in Judge Foote's own handwriting. When this can be analyzed and made available to the researcher we shall know even better how great a treasure we possess in the FOOTE COLLECTION.

Next is the OBED EDSON COLLECTION, made by the venerable gentleman of that name, a Past Pres. of this organization, and a name familiar to us all. As I understand, this wonderful gift came to us through Mr. Walter Edson. This Collection covers several hundred books, pamphlets, manuscripts, papers, many of which were written by Mr. Edson and contributed to this and other Societies. His interests were nation-wide. One might cite a great & inclusive interest in Chautauqua County and in this Society; land titles, old text-books, Histories, old travel records, the Niagara & Ohio River Frontier areas, State Boundaries, and then very specially, geological data of our region, and last & perhaps greatest his interest in New York State Indian lore. The wealth of this is difficult to appraise.

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Indian material
and many large libraries might envy us the possession of many of these works in book and pamphlet form—the very authors' names and the titles bespeak their rarity and importance.

I want also to mention the Collections made by Charles M. Reed and Phin M. Miller, both past presidents of this Society, whose collections were presented to our Library.

Mr. Reed's collection, in addition to general books, is a series of loose leaf scrapbooks filled with material relating to Chautauqua County matters and men. There are some brief stories of Forest Crissey's in clipping form, which are not easy to find. Among them is a quaint short tale "In the Footsteps of Wugoof" This is based on elephant footprints discovered along the edge of a brook, in Chautauqua County. It is said to be founded on an episode of which Phin M. Miller was the hero. We consider this collection also as a treasure.

Mr. Phin M. Miller, one of this Society's real benefactors, an author and collector, has in his collection a great deal of material dealing with the Town of Stockton, and a magnificent manuscript history of that town. There is also material dealing with this Society, and a wealth of material dealing with Education in Chautauqua County. His contribution too adds greatly to our Library.

A subject on which more than this entire period could be spent is that of our scrapbooks, of which, not counting those already mentioned there are more than a dozen. Most of them were made by people now dead many years. Their contents consist largely of old newspaper clippings and manuscript material. They date back often more than a hundred years. Some time when their contents have been analyzed & catalogued we shall know what priceless information they contain on our early days. Very recently we have received from Mr. Charles H. Brown a volume of clippings made by his grandfather, the Hon. Samuel A. Brown. Mr. Samuel A. Brown was one of Jamestown's earliest lawyers, a leader at the bar, a promoter of education, a church worker and builder. His scrapbook dating back to the 1840's is treasure trove indeed.

Increasingly the world is finding old MAPS among the most important sources of historic information. We are fortunate to have in our possession many pertaining to Chautauqua County, and its history, from even before its beginnings. Among them are real Treasures. Some that are unique and not replaceable.

We may speak first of 8 photostatic copies of French maps made at a time when France was fighting to keep and to enlarge its dominions on the American continent, the period which ended with the French and Indian War, and with England becoming the conqueror. Through the courtesy of Mr. R. Pier Wright we own today eight of these maps. They date from 1729 to the 1750s. They are rich in their depiction of the crucial area from Central New York west, and particularly filled with details from the Niagara frontier through to Pittsburgh and the Ohio River. There is also the
the Bellini map of 1744, of the Great Lakes, part of Canada, and all of what is now the United States as far as this country had been explored west of the Mississippi River. The copies of these maps were secured, some from Paris, others from libraries & archives in Ottawa, Toronto, Cleveland, and other cities where the original French maps are owned. All of them give graphic representation of our own region at the time, and before Celoron made his famous expedition through Chautauqua County. We can truly call them treasures.

Within the year we received from Mr. Elmer O. Brinkman a fine photostatic copy of an old map of the town of Westfield of about 1835. This map shows the roads, streams, mills, churches, sawmills, etc. Printed on the map is a short descriptive article regarding Westfield and Portland Harbor.

As you remember, in 1950 at one of our meetings of this society, Mr. Walter Edson presented, as a gift from Samuel J. Lasser of Jamestown, a rare large map of the property at Van Buren Harbor laid off in blocks, with illustrations indicating proposed improvements for harbor facilities and for the land area. There is an inset showing a part of Chautauqua County; also the route of the N.Y. & Erie, and Buffalo and Erie railroads; and the R.R. from Van Buren to Fredonia. This map was made by S.M. Cushing in 1836.

We have also a very interesting small map of Chautauqua County, cloth mounted & on sticks. This map is dated 1839 and is one of the earliest known County maps. Added at the bottom of the map itself is, first a statistical abstract and second a descriptive sketch of the County in 1839.

Within only a few days we discovered a small map presented by Mr. Henry Leworthy. It is one out from a Morris Universal Geography, published in Massachusetts in 1793, of Pennsylvania, a part of New York, etc. It shows at this early date, before settlement, the lakes and streams in Chautauqua County. In this geography Chautauqua was spelled Chatoque one of the interesting variants.

Perhaps our most unique map, and maybe our most valuable treasure in the map line, is a fairly large map made on very thin paper, which may have been hand-drawn. It is a map of Chautauqua County and parts of Cattaraugus and Erie Counties. Each county is plainly marked and named. Offset in red lines is a section including 7 townships of Chautauqua County, 3 of Cattaraugus, and 3 of Erie counties. Across this area in bold letters is the name SCHUYLER. Undoubtedly this map dates back to the 1840s when a definite effort seems to have been made on the part of these Townships which were indignant at the County Seat (Mayville) being so far from them, to have the State erect an additional county, the name suggested to be SCHUYLER. As neither the State Library at Albany, nor the Buffalo Historical Society Library appears to have any knowledge of such a map, it must be rare.

We have several other valuable maps, of Chautauqua County, and some of individual communities; several copies of the fine map of Chautauqua County published in 1854. Unfortunately our copies are not in good condition.
Coming to the matter of General books, it is difficult to choose titles from among so many. Only the high spots can be touched in passing. Through the interest of H. Harold Meyer of Cincinnati, a former Westfield resident, our Library is to have a case of books filled with titles by Chautauqua County authors. He has already sent us about 60 volumes. They represent Chas. Austin Fondiick (Harry Castlemon) who was the country's favorite boys' author from the 1870s to into the 1890s; Grace Richmond, Richard E. Ely, John R. Spears, Jacob Riis, Jean Webster and others. To them we are adding as we go along. Dr. Harold W. Thompson foremost among compilers of New York state Folklore has given us his BODY, BOOJ, and BRIGHTES, a particularly precious copy. It is copy 1 of the first edition. Dr. Thompson presented this to his mother. Since her death he has given it to us. Of Tourgee we have a number, I will mention only two "BUFFTON'S INN" a first edition; and a "FOOL'S ERRAND," also a very early edition. This was an expose' in fiction form of the Ku Klux Klan as Tourgee experienced it when a Federal Judge in the South. The fame of this book went round the world. One real treasure we recently received is a copy of "COUNTRY BOY," by Forrest Crissey. This book is rare & now hard to find. I am sure that many of you, who like me, when the book was first issued, wandered with the Country Boy to Hartfield and Mayville and Fredonia will remember it with love. The fact that this book and another by the author were presented to us by Mrs. Forrest Crissey, with inscriptions by her to the Chautauqua County Historical Society makes them even more precious.

Worthy Putnam is a name to conjure with in the Education field. We have his nationally acclaimed work on Accent. We have also a fragment of his note-book, which he carried when as Commissioner of Educ. he travelled all over the County, visiting each school and jotting down his findings. I will read a couple of brief excerpts to show what his standards of excellence were. Discipline, Mental Arithmetic, and Singing seem to have been prime requisites.

Sherman July 27. NO.12. Miss-----One of the good schools. 60 on the rolls. Miss-----has a happy way of talking to pupils and on instructing classes. She is quite successful. Some of the little ones are somewhat uneasy, but that is to be expected in so large a school of small pupils. Trustees HAVE NOT visited.

July 30. No.6 Busti. Miss-----is doing tolerably well in instruction but fails in that perfect discipline which ought to exist in every school. Some play, all whisper more or less & there is too much moving about on seats... Their attention should be fixed upon their business which is not the case....

August 30. Stockton. Miss-----'s school appears well, the pupils sitting very quiet and show that they are under good discipline. Some of the pupils cannot speak the letter s and want drilling in the elementary sounds. Seven study Mental arithmetic. All sing. Trustees HAVE visited the school
A rare and interesting item is *Exile in Van Diemen's Land* by Linus Miller. A Stockton boy, Linus Miller went over in 1837 to help Canada in her brief rebellion against England. He was captured and with many others was sent to Van Diemen's Land, now Tasmania, which might be called England's Devil's Island. Here for seven years he suffered as a prisoner, under terrible conditions. In 1845 due to protests on the part of the United States government, and of liberal Englishmen, the American prisoners were pardoned. His book dedicated to William H. Seward who had made every effort to secure his release, gives a most graphic account of a grueling experience, the details of which are probably not generally known. I consider this a real treasure.

One very valuable and unusual work we have is unique for the labor involved and the historical value it possesses. This is the series of Muster Rolls, for each town in Chautauqua County, of the Chautauqua County men who served in the Civil War. Here in concise form is a record of each man's service from enlistment to discharge. This work has already been consulted by a number of persons. Both the compiler and the donor of this series is John O. Bowman. We prize the set. Unfortunately our volume on Sherman is missing. Someone must have borrowed and failed to return it. We should like it back.

Our Library is rich in matters of County government and procedure. We have a complete set of the Proceedings of the Board of Supervisors from 1850 on. So far as I know there are only two other such files in the County.

As a last item I will mention a few books you may not think are treasures. They are a number of old volumes of Gospel Hymns and other old songs. I wonder whether there are not a number of you here, especially if you attended the little country school who, like me, recall when each morning school opened with a reading or prayer and then we all stood and sang lustily—on key or off—from the little songbooks—Gospel Hymns and old songs—. This brings me to the Singing School. Through the courtesy of the Patterson Library I have been permitted to copy for our Society an original manuscript on a Singing School at Volusia, a few miles from Westfield. It was written by Miss Josephine Hopkins about 1910, and refers back to about 1850. It is a very interesting account of an actual singing school. It ends like this:— Quote. "The following bit of verse gives a somewhat correct idea of the old-time Singing School."

"Best of all at singing school they passed the evening hours away.
There from the schoolroom's chimney place the blazing logs flung light and cheer;
And all the young folks of the place came flocking in from far and near.
A tallow candle here and there made wavering shadows on the wall.
The Master rose with serious air, and notes began to rise and fall."
"He strikes the tuning fork again, and lists its ring with practised ear:

"Do me sol do he hums, and then DEFEND US FROM THE SOUNDS WE HEAR!"

'Do Re Mi Fa Sol La Si Do, the young soprano shrilly cries
Do Si La Sol Fa Mi Re Do--anon the callow bass replies.

Down, Left, Right, Up, the baton swings, the frantic shadows come and go.

The class with zealous vigor sings the songs our mothers used to know."

'Tho little skilled in vocal art; though discords through the music run--

There's harmony in each glad heart, and hope, and love, and guileless fun."

End of quote.

After this I need not tell you that I am no musician; but I will nevertheless let this be my Swan Song, and merely say, I have not told you about all of our Treasures...

End of quote.

Emma W. Pechl

at Mayville, N.Y.

October 4, 1952