

New Jersey

by Lynne Belluscio

Back in April, I wrote about an exhibit at Macculloch Hall in Morristown, New Jersey. It featured the work of James Kelley, a sculptor who was known for his statues of Civil War generals. What interested me was a plaster cast for the 1911 Ingham plaque in the LeRoy High School building on Trigon Park. My plan was to take the Historical Society on a bus trip to visit Macculloch Hall in the spring, but that didn't work out, so I rescheduled the trip for September.

Last Thursday we left LeRoy House at 8 am and arrived at Mcculloch Hall at 2:30. We toured the house which was filled with phenomenal 18th and 19 century antiques. We also discovered that Macculloch Hall has the largest collection of work by Thomas Nast. He was known as a political cartoonist and created the modern image of Santa Clause and the Republican elephant. He lived across the street from Macculloch Hall.

We also discovered that the wisteria that grows in the Macculloch Hall garden, was brought back from the Far East with Commodore Perry – on the same trip that Jacob LeRoy's son, Edward, served as secretary to the American ambassador. Then of course, in the Kelley Exhibit, we had the opportunity to see the original plaster cast for Emily and Marietta Ingham, and learned that Kelley also did a bronze bust of Ely Parker, the Seneca Indian from the Tonawanda Reservation, who served as secretary to General Ulysses Grant. The bust is owned by the Rochester Museum and Science Center. (I should mention that we watched the movie "Lincoln" on the way home, and Ely Parker is in the scene at Appomattox.)

The next day we visited Historic Speedwell, which is a historic site operated by the Morris County Parks Department. It is known as the "Birthplace of the Telegraph" because it was on this site, on January 6, 1838, that Samuel Morris, sent the first message by telegraph. We spent the morning learning that it was Stephen Vail and his son Alfred, who did

most of the work and financed the project.

Morris and Vail proposed that Congress appropriate \$30,000 to install 41 miles of telegraph wire between the Supreme Court Chamber in Washington and the train station in Baltimore. On February 23, 1843, the telegraph bill passed the House - barely - by a vote of 89 to 83, with 70 members abstaining. One of those Congressmen, who voted for the bill, was LeRoy's Abolitionist, Seth Gates. At this time, he had moved to Warsaw, (his house is owned by the Warsaw Historical Society). The voting register is on exhibit at Speedwell.

On Saturday morning we were scheduled to visit the Ford Mansion at the Morristown National Historic Park. (Ironically closed today because of the lack of action by Congress.) I was apologetic to the group, because this Revolutionary War site doesn't have any connection to LeRoy - or so I thought. The only Revolutionary War event that came close to LeRoy was the Clinton and Sullivan campaign in 1779, which brought American soldiers, under orders from General Washington, to Western New York to drive the Iroquois from their land and to burn their villages and crops.

The army got as far as Cuylerville near Geneseo. Two scouts were captured, tortured and killed however, the Sullivan campaign was declared a success and they returned to rejoin Washington's army. What I didn't realize, until I picked up the newsletter from the Morristown National Park, was that the Clinton and Sullivan soldiers rejoined Washington at Morristown. Washington decided to spend the winter of 1779-1780 at the home of Mrs. Jacob Ford,



LeRoy visitors to the Ford Mansion, Morristown, New Jersey. This house was Washington's headquarters during the winter of 1779-1780. George slept here and so did Martha. Ten thousand soldiers, including the men from the Clinton and Sullivan Campaign of Western New York, stayed in log cabins in Jockey Hollow, five miles away.

Jr. (This house was the first National Historic Park in the National Park Service system, being designated in 1933.) His troops, including the men from the Clinton and Sullivan brigades, would encamp five miles away at Jockey Hollow.

We learned that this winter encampment was where "America Survived". Ten thousand men prepared to encamp for the winter. Before they could build log cabins, snow started to fall and collapsed their tents. When they finally built their cabins – 1,000 of them, the snow had piled up 6 feet deep. No supplies could reach them. The men were barely clothed and there was no food, nor could they forage for game. They went days with nothing to eat. The Continental Congress refused to appropriate money or

supplies. Washington continued to write letters pleading for help.

In the meantime, the winter of 1779-1780 was proving to be one of the coldest of the century and snow continued to fall. Finally, when a group of Congressmen arrived to see for themselves, they declared that it was even worse than what Washington had described. Everyone knows about Valley Forge, but it is Morristown that they should remember.

Many of the men who had come to Western New York with Clinton and Sullivan, would survive the winter at Morristown and help win the war with England. They would remember the green, fertile land of Western New York, and after the war would become our early pioneers and settlers.

Yummy!

- menus
- banners
- posters
- placemats
- table tents

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LP Graphics 1 Church St.
LeRoy, NY 14482

585.768.2201
www.lpgraphics.net