

Lewiston History Mysteries

Niagara University Locates on Lewiston Farm in 1857

Distinguished local university celebrates 150th anniversary

Nov. 21, 1856, is considered the birthday of "Old Niagara." On that date, Father John J. Lynch, C.M., and Father John Monaghan, C.M., established a seminary on Best Street in Buffalo.

But shortly after setting up, the priests decided to look for a large tract of land for future expansion. They found an ideal setting along the Niagara Gorge in Lewiston.

So, Fr. Lynch purchased a 110-acre farm on Feb. 23, 1857, with a down payment of \$2,000. The adjacent 160-acre DeVeaux estate and farm was purchased on April 6, 1857, for \$15,582.

Just 23 weeks after being founded, on May 1, 1857, the College and Seminary of Our Lady of Angels made the big move from Buffalo to Lewiston. The college would later become Niagara University.

New York state chartered the school in 1863, when it was empowered to confer degrees. A year later, Thomas Hopkins, a seminarian, was killed in a fire that destroyed Clet Hall. Legend has it that his "ghost" still haunts the building.

Since those early days, Niagara University has become a major institution in New York state and has graduated over 29,000 alumni who have assumed positions in virtually every career area.

Welcome to Lewiston, NY

The Historical Association of Lewiston hopes you enjoy your visit to our historic and charming village. The Lewiston Museum is at 469 Plain Street.

Mark your calendar for this year's spectacular Historic Home Tour on Dec. 2 & 3, 2006.

To get the latest news and monthly program info, join our free email list. Just send an email to: join@HistoricLewiston.org

www.HistoricLewiston.org

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Father John Lynch Purchases DeVeaux Farm

In 1857, Fr. John Lynch, a Vincentian priest, purchased the 160-acre DeVeaux farm complete with a barn and the two-story tavern known as The Half-Way House, named for its location between the current Whirlpool Bridge and Lewiston (where NU is located today).

Three NU Saints?

Three Niagara University alumni have been proposed for sainthood -- Fr. Nelson Baker of Buffalo; Fr. John Drumgoole, who established the Mt. Loretto Mission; and Fr. Michael McGivney, who is said to have conceived the idea for the Knights of Columbus while studying at NU.

Today, the Knights look to "Old Niagara" as their birthplace.



Purple Eagles Did you know?

- The Scaffidi Gymnasium, originally known as the East Gym, was formerly an airplane hangar at McGuire Air Force Base in New Jersey.

- In 1885, the Niagara University baseball team entered its first year of competition. Among the notable players during those early years was Philadelphia native Joe McCarthy, who went on to manage the great New York Yankees teams of the '30s and '40s that won eight World Series titles.

- * Former professional basketball coaches Frank Layden (Utah Jazz) and Hubie Brown (New York Knicks and Memphis Grizzlies) were teammates and roommates at Niagara University in the early 1950s. A third NU graduate, Larry Costello, a pro player, later coached the Milwaukee Bucks.

- NBA Hall of Fame member Calvin Murphy is the leading scorer in Niagara University men's basketball history with 2,548 points. Murphy's single-game scoring record of 68 points was set against Syracuse on Dec. 7, 1968.

- An 18-hole golf course was established on campus in the 1930s, but was lost when the Power Project was built in the late 1950s.



How Niagara University Looked 123 Years Ago

Here's an artist rendering of the campus in 1883, when the school was relatively new. NU's location gave it a magnificent gorge view setting. The building in the center is Clet Hall and the steepled structure on the right is Alumni Chapel. Alumni Chapel was destroyed by fire and was rebuilt without the large steeple.



Education That Makes a Difference

Local Tops Market Founder Leaves Artistic and Historic Legacy

The Castellani Art Museum opened on the NU campus in May 1990. It cost around \$3.5 million to construct, and contains 23,000 square feet of exhibition space. It was financed by retired founder and chairman of Tops Markets and university trustee Armand J. Castellani and his wife, Eleanor, of Niagara Falls.

The Castellani Museum received a \$79,000 grant in April 2005 to be the headquarters for the new Regional Interpretive Center of the Underground Railroad -- the secret system of routes and volunteers who smuggled slaves from the South to freedom in Canada. Lewiston was a primary crossing for the escaping slaves. The project is part of Heritage, New York, funded by the state.

For more information about Niagara University, go to:

www.niagara.edu