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Schooner Days MXCVI (1116)
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Happier Brides' Diary – Night Spots In N.Y. Fore Steam Whistles

The NEW YORK directory of 1813 (almost as precious as Ann Smith MacDonell's diary) has 17,700 names and addresses, so there were perhaps 30,000 people in the American metropolis. Toronto had 500 inhabitants and no directory.

The New York one tells me 31 Albany sailing packets then called regularly at Lent's Basin in New York, and 20 Albany lumber sloops plied regularly to Swartwout's. There were also sailing packets, sloops and market boats to the number of 341 plying between New York, Boston, Baltimore and intervening points. Eighty of these served Long Island. There were even five steamers on the Hudson River—and no others. Fulton launched the first, his *Clermont*, in 1807 – two years too late to give the fair Anne the thrill of coming home by the wonder of the age.

She came by Sloop

When Anne Smith MacDonell of Toronto reached New York in 1805 it was Capt. Bogart's first class passenger sloop, after a four-day voyage down the Hudson from Albany. The landing was with as much civility as would mark the arrival of the Queen Elizabeth from Britain.

"I wrote a few lines to Miss Glover, as did Mrs. McGill to Mr. A. McGill, who immediately came aboard, when we dined," recorded Anne in her diary for June 23, 1805. They had reached New York at 2 p.m.

Lion of the Day

Sir Alexander Mackenzie, first to cross Canada to the Pacific "By Land" as he wrote, was one of Anne's twelve fellow travelers in this pearl of packets. "Sir Alexander's politeness," the diary continues, "would not allow him to go on shore till he attended to our separate quarters. Mrs. M. kindly asked me to accompany Mrs. McGill. After making some little arrangements in our dress which we thought necessary" – how feminine – "we were attended by Sir Alexander, Mr. McLean and Mr. Mitchel. I really felt sorry to separate from Mrs. McGill."

The lady was the wife of Capt. John McGill, Commissary at York, U.C., fellow voyager with Anne from Toronto, and the McGills were friends of the Mitchels.

Saw Fireworks

Two nights later Anne was seeing the bright lights of Broadway or their 1805 equivalents – an American imitation of the famous Vauxhall Gardens of London, England, opened in 1660 and going strong as late as 1889.

"Sir Alex and Mr. McLean called and asked me to go to Vauxhall Gardens with Mrs. McGill. Six o'clock went to the Gardens with only Mrs. McG, Sir A. and Mr. McL. And Miss G.

went before with a large party, which we soon joined. I met several acquaintances who I was glad to see. Mr. Brevoit left Fort York (York? or Niagara?) on the 30th (June) and was in N.Y. ten days before us – came by land. On that day he parted with Mr. McDonell (as she always called her husband, even to his face). He was well. I was pleased with the Gardens, delighted with the fireworks, and came home at eleven quite satisfied with the evening's entertainment."

Quakers and Theatres

Next night it was the theatre, "after a visit to my old Quaker friends in Pearl street," and diary gives a glimpse of Anne as critic, dramatic and social:

"Mr. McLean and Sir Alexander to ask us to the theatre. We were a large party, Mrs. McGill, Miss Glover, the Miss Mitchels, the Mr. Mitchels, Mr. Bell, Mr. Crookshank, Mr. McLean and several others. A full house. Mr. Cooper, Mrs. Wignel and Mr. Swait, the principal performers, the play, *The Orphan*.

"I did not like it, tho' it was performed well. I wished I had not gone. It was very indelicate and the plot horrid. Between the play and entertainment spoke to several acquaintances. General Van Cortland – "one of the greatest men in the States, old but apparently much younger than any on board" in Anne's diary – "had just come into our box to speak, when in bounced Mrs. Peters, Mrs. Rikeman and Miss Jarvis. I should have been pleased to see them anywhere else, but it was an uncommon thing to see Ladies change their box and very rude of them to stay (through) the entertainment and turn our gentlemen out – especially General Van Cortland.

The old beaux gallantly called the next day, along with Sir Alexander. "Dined at Mr. M's with a party of about 14. There was a Mr. Carpenter who acknowledged me as an old acquaintance, tho' I did not receive him. He seems a pleasant man.

Ice Cream and Cake

"After tea, Sir Alexander proposed a walk on The Battery – we all acquiesced and thither went. After walking around (Battery Park) once we visited Columbia Garden, 9 or 10 o'clock being the fashionable hour to visit this garden. It is small tho' larger than when I saw it before. It has a fountain and we were entertained with music and got some nice ice cream and cake. After sitting some time and having a little chit chat we went again to the Battery and walked around. It was a charming evening and quite refreshing on the Battery."

But pleasures are like poppies spread and like ice cream and cake have to be paid for. Next diary entry, July 29: "Not well, had a very bad night's rest, stayed at home all day." Next day Ann was herself again and "Went to the Brick Theatre – it was an agreeable evening and I got to Broadway at 11 o'clock, Mrs. and Miss Glover wondering what had become of me."

Shocking hours.