

Guide to the Albert Andrus Collection

64.11

Special Collections
Benjamin F. Feinberg Library
SUNY Plattsburgh
Plattsburgh, NY 12901

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April 1984

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July 2007

Introduction

“Albert Andrus was the son of Cone Andrus a pioneer” of Malone, New York.¹ Andrus was born in 1817 and had four brothers: Leonard, Lucius, William, and George. After Cone Andrus died² in 1821, Albert and his mother moved to Vermont.

Sometime later Albert Andrus moved back to Malone to become a “clerk in the store of Dr. Amsden,” then to Michigan where he also acquired employment as a clerk, then back to Malone where he remained.³

Because of his clerking experience and the “few hundred dollars her inherited from his father, Andrus had sufficient capital to engage in a mercantile business of his own account.”⁴ “Andrus was shrewd, careful, and possessed excellent practical judgment. His merchandizing was successful, and he accumulated a comfortable fortune as wealth is measured in a rural community.”⁵

Upon his settling permanently in Malone, Andrus married Mary Ann Jackson of Milton, Vermont. They had three children: Albert Edward, Catherine, and a daughter who later married Sidney Robinson. Catherine passed away before the death of her father in 1889.

Before overseeing his own mercantile enterprises, Albert Andrus was involved in a variety of business and political ventures. He “invested in bank stock in both Malone and other localities. He was the director of a number of banks. He was also a stockholder of the Ogdensburg and Lake Champlain Railroad Company and a member of its Board of

¹ Frederick J. Seaver, *Historical Sketches of Franklin County and Its Several Towns, With Many Short Biographies* (Albany: J.B. Lyon Co., 1918): 716.

² “Death of Hon. Albert Andrus,” *Malone Palladium*, 25 July 1889, p.2, col. 1.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Seaver, *Historical Sketches*, 716.

Directors.”⁶ Because he was the Wood Agent in Malone for this company, he was active in its management. “Andrus also speculated in safe securities and real estate.”⁷ In 1878 Albert was accused of “availing his position as Wood Agent for the Ogdensburg and Lake Champlain Railroad to make large profits from transactions in wood vouchers.”⁸ The outcome of this accusation is unclear.

The next year, on “October 1, 1879, Andrus along with six other prominent men in the community organized the Malone Belmont Company in Malone.”⁹

Andrus was active politically, especially during the American Civil War period. “Andrus was the Democratic nominee for the assembly a number of times prior to the Civil War, but was always defeated by small majorities.” In 1861 he was nominated to the assembly by the Union Party, composed of Republicans and War Democrats. He was elected in 1861 and reelected in 1862 and 1863.”¹⁰ “During his three years of service he held chairmanships of banks and second place on the Ways and Means Committee. His legislative record was free from reproach of any kind and full of usefulness, constituting the brightest page of his life.”¹¹

“Franklin County presented his name for senator in 1865, but St. Lawrence County doubted his Republicanism, and refused to accept him. Soon after this episode he once again identified himself with the Democratic Party. After a few years he ceased to take an active interest in politics and devoted himself to business affairs.”¹²

“The last fifteen years of Albert Andrus’ life were spent largely in retirement. He suffered with pain and without the strength for active labor. Eventually he became an invalid. His winters were spent generally in the south.”¹³ “He died of Peritonitis* in his home on July 19, 1889. He was seventy-two years and four months old.”¹⁴ “Nearly all of his estate went to his wife. Townspeople speculated Andrus to be worth approximately a quarter of a million dollars. There was probably only one other resident in the county as wealthy as Mr. Andrus.”¹⁵

More information on Albert Andrus and his activities concerning the Ogdensburg and Lake Champlain Railroad Company can be found in the Northern Railroad Collection (64.10) and in the Robert F. Hale Collection (64.5).

Background Resources in Special Collections

“Andrus Heard From.” *Plattsburgh Sentinel*. 27 Sep. 1866. p.2, col.3.

⁶ “Death of Hon. Albert Andrus.”

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Northern Railroad Collection (Special Collections, Feinberg Library, SUNY Plattsburgh, Plattsburgh, N.Y.), Box 3, Folder 60.

⁹ *History of Clinton and Franklin Counties* (Plattsburgh: Clinton County American Revolution Bicentennial Commission (1978): 60.

¹⁰ Seaver, *Historical Sketches*, 716.

¹¹ “Death of Hon. Albert Andrus.”

¹² Seaver, *Historical Sketches*, 716.

¹³ “Death of Hon. Albert Andrus.”

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

"Death of Hon. Albert Andrus." *Malone Palladium*. 25 July 1889. p.2, col.1.

History of Clinton and Franklin Counties. Plattsburgh, N.Y.: Clinton County American Revolution Bicentennial Commission, 1978.

The Legislative Manual for the State of New York. Albany: Weed Parsons and Company, 1861.

Manual for the Use of the Legislature for New York State. Albany: Weed Parsons and Company, 1864.

Seaver, Frederick H. *Historical Sketches of Franklin County and Its Several Towns, With Many Short Biographies*. Albany: J.B. Lyon Co., 1918.

Special Collections, Benjamin F. Feinberg Library, SUNY Plattsburgh. 64.10. "Northern Railroad Collection."

Special Collections, Benjamin F. Feinberg Library, SUNY Plattsburgh. 6/6/4. "Miscellaneous Manuscripts."