

James G. Bailey, City of Plattsburgh Historian, 1982 -2010

Jim has enjoyed working for the City of Plattsburgh for many years, both as a volunteer, and in his official position as City Historian. Jim is a native of Elizabethtown, NY. He attended RPI, and graduated from SUNY, Albany, with a Master's degree in Mathematics. In 1967, he won a National Science Foundation grant for a second Master's degree from Cornell University. Long before the formal BOP commemoration events, Jim celebrated 9.11 because it is his birthday. Jim celebrated his 50th birthday, in 1986, with a ferry boat trip to Crab Island, followed by the downtown ceremonies.

For several years, Jim conducted Sunday afternoon walking tours downtown to visit interesting historic sites in the city. He spearheaded a fund raiser to restore the Riverside Cemetery grave of Reverend Halsey, the Army Chaplain to the American troops of the BOP. For the city's 90th birthday, Jim found portraits of all of Plattsburgh's mayors, except one, to hang in the common Council Chambers. Jim also organized downtown clean up days for Earth Day, served as a liaison on the Saranac River Trail Committee, the North Country Underground Railroad Association, and as a board member of the Clinton County Historical Association.

Jim's crowning achievement came in 2013. After many years of downtown BOP celebrations, Jim decided to tackle a bigger project: a mountain in Lewis, NY. Originally named Macdonough by the cartographer and surveyor Colvin, the mountain was renamed Slip in 1953. Colvin had stated specifically, "to the loftiest peak of the Jay Range in Essex County, I have given the name of Mount Macdonough, after the gallant officer whose victory upon Lake Champlain was witnessed by this mountain." Jim went to work, and petitioned the USGS to restore the rightful name to the mountain. He cut through piles of red tape, and on December 12, 2013, Jim's complaints were registered. Macdonough's name was restored to the mountain, in time for the 2014 Bicentennial Celebration of the BOP.

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