



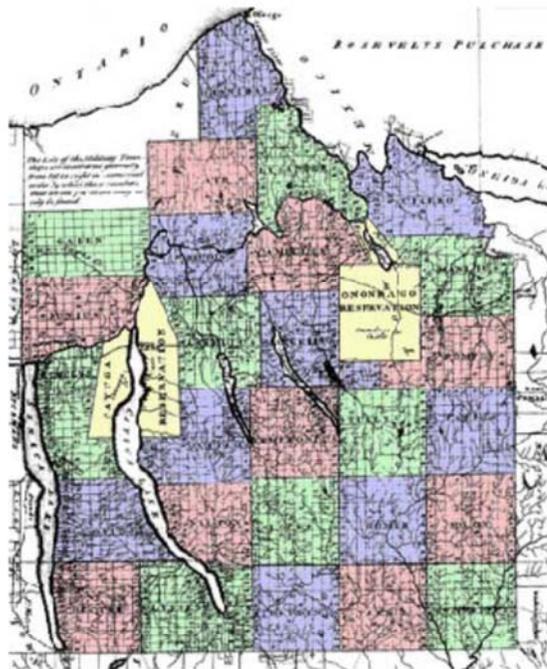
The Backbone

A publication of the Backbone Ridge History Group of Schuyler, Seneca, and Tompkins Counties

BECAUSE HISTORY MATTERS

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History of the New Military Tract in New York State

Difficulties in establishing New Military Tract lands to reward men for their Revolution War military service

Focusing on the Backbone Ridge in the New Military Tract Townships of Hector, Ovid and Ulysses

Presented by Map Historian Robert Kibbee and Seneca County Historian Walter Gable

**May 5, 2018
2 to 4 PM**

**Trumansburg American Legion Post 770
4431 Seneca Road, Trumansburg, N.Y.**

**Sponsored by the Backbone Ridge History Group
With support from the Nelson B. Delavan Foundation**

For more information e-mail orchardland@zoom-dsl.com

BY ALLAN BUDDLE

Happy New Year! It's hard to believe that it is April already. Hope you survived the winter. I would like to ask you to welcome renewing and new members of the BRHG Board of Directors. David Smith has returned for another 3-year term. At the Annual Membership Meeting four new Trustees were elected: Harold Bush, Regional Governor of the Lions Club, Julie Morris, former Director of the Schuylar County History Museum, Samantha Solveson, Pioneer Printing, Joe Chicone and Renee Baum, Principals and Lead Performers of Uncle Joe and the Rosebud Ramblers. At the January Trustee meeting, the following slate of officers was nominated and elected: President- Maria Kennedy, Vice President- Harold Bush, Secretary- Julie Morris, and Treasurer- Allan Buddle. Thank you to David and Erica Townsend for their service during 2016 and 2017.

The year 2018 is shaping up to be very interesting and educational as progress is made and shared on the Military Lot Project. The first of three public programs is scheduled for May 5th, from 2 to 4 PM at the Trumansburg American Legion where Map historian Robert Kibbee and Seneca County Historian Walter Gable will present on the creation of the Military Tract, extending into details about the Military Townships of Ovid, Hector and Ulysses and how the Lots in each Town were laid out to prepare for settlement.

We also will return to the Reynoldsville Cemetery on June 1 and 2 with rain dates of June 8 and 9. Last fall the Town of Hector Highway Department removed some of the brush piles that have accumulated over several years of cemetery cleanup work. However the strong winds the first week in April have blown down more trees adding substantially to the work needed this spring and probably next fall too. If anyone can come and help it will be much appreciated. In addition to cleaning up downed limbs and branches, it has become obvious that to keep this cemetery in good condition it will be necessary to weed eat the growth above the ground cover, twice each year. The BRHG expects to purchase a weed eater for this purpose for volunteers to use that don't have their own. It takes about 6 hours each spring and fall with a weed eater to keep up with that aspect of maintenance.

We also hope with sufficient assistance, that a start can be made on cleaning up the Everts-Mathews Cemetery on the other side of the Backbone Ridge near the intersection of State Route 414 and Mathews Road. If anyone would like to help with either of these cemeteries please contact us at 607 546 5533 or orchard-land@zoom-dsl.com.

Thank you for your continuing support. Please check your mailing label to determine if

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your dues payment is current.

The Woven Coverlet- Who was Elizabeth Reynolds, by Marty Schlabach appeared on the cover page of the December, 2017 issue of the *Backbone*. Patt Dietlin responded as follows:

“Well, I didn't find out anything about Elizabeth Reynolds, but I happened upon the following information.”

J. M. Davidson was the son of Scottish emigrant Archibald Davidson. Archibald was born in 1771 and sailed to America sometime before 1795. Reputedly, he was trained as a weaver in Scotland. His arrival in America may have been to Pennsylvania, as he married Jane McPhail in the 2nd Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia on December 10, 1795. In the waning years of that decade, Archibald and Jane had two sons; James T. and Titus. Two more sons followed: John M. in 1800 and Albert in 1805 (?). Between the births of John and Albert, Archibald was recorded as being the postmaster in Bursonville, Pennsylvania (north of Philadelphia). By 1806, the family had removed to Mansfield in Burlington County, New Jersey. Seven more children would be birthed at this location: Priscilla (1806), Patrick (1807), James J. (1808?), Jane (1809?), Archibald 2 (1812?), Joseph J (1814), and Thomas S. (1818). Less than two decades later, the

1835 found Archibald in business as a weaver in Ithaca, New York; his carpet factory being located on Cascadilla Creek (near present day College Town). Among other textiles, the factory produced Jacquard coverlets, using the punch card technology of looms made in France. Davidson unabashedly marked his coverlets in one corner (see box at left).

**WOVEN
AT THE
ITHACA
CARPET FACTORY
BY ARCH
DAVIDSON
1835**

The June 22, 1829, The Castigator, an Ithaca based newspaper, carried the following announcement: "Married at Eddysville on the evening of the 18th by Reverend Robinson, the rev. John Davidson to Caroline Bascom formerly of Berkshire and rev George Gibbs of Trumansburgh to Priscilla Davidson daughter of Archibald Davidson Esq. immigrant from Scotland."

By 1835, John and his brother Joseph were working in Lodi as fancy weavers. In the following decade, John and his family removed to Sandusky Ohio – later to Earlsville, LaSalle Indiana. In the 1850's, Archibald Sr. and sons James T., Thomas, and Joseph J. were working as weavers in Warsaw, New York.

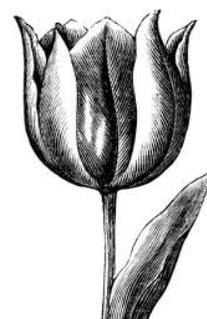
Another son, Albert, was also living in Warsaw, working as a carpenter. Archibald Sr. died in Warsaw on January 5, 1854, at the age of 83.

**SPRING ON THE BACKBONE RIDGE
1882 AND 1884**

CONTRIBUTED BY MARSHA SMITH, JULIE MORRIS AND ALLAN BUDDLE

The paragraph below from a recent best seller book provides a national perspective as background for the April 1882 and 1884 Diaries written by Elizabeth Fletcher and Herman T. Smith respectively. Ms. Fletcher lived near the intersection of Searsburg and Potomac Roads in the Town of Hector and Mr. Smith lived near the Intersection of Halls Corners and Townline Roads in the Town of Covert.

"Panic, drought and failure consumed the 1870s but the national economy was beginning to stir. In 1879, Frank Woolworth opened his first successful Five and Dime. In 1880, George Pullman built his railway car factory. In 1882, John D. Rockefeller founded Standard Oil, and in 1885, Alexander Graham Bell launched American Telephone and Telegraph.signs of prosperity also signaled a new anxiety stalking the agricultural community, one engendered by increasing intense competition.As a result, waves of populist sentiment rolled across the land, and farmers began agitating for railroad regulation. First among the organizations formed to support them was the Grange, which attracted more than 750,000 members. Grange Halls, modeled after the fraternal organization of the Freemasons, sprang up in town after town.Such farmers' movements emphasized the growing divide between urban and rural America. In the 1870s, two-thirds of Americans still lived in rural areas, but that was down significantly from the 1820s, when 90 percent had been farmers." 1



Diary of Elizabeth Fletcher, 1882

April 1st it has not stormed to day and has been quite warm no one here. Gust has been feeling better to day he rested last night – better than he has any night in two weeks I have been working upstairs most of the afternoon and am very tired to night. I have been taking things out of the big cloths room and putting the bed in there that was in the west room upstairs for Leroy Welch to sleep in. he is going to work here this summer. Gust give him 20 dollars per month and we do his washing he will commence work Monday.

April 2nd it has been quite pleasant all day. I have got a terrible cold and in fact we all have. John Lib George and Charlie and Addie Wixom were all here to day, and staid until nearly night
Monday 3rd it has been very pleasant all day I did my washing this forenoon and mother and I did the ironing this afternoon Leroy Welch commenced his work here this morning he has been drawing wood all day drew 5 loads. The roads are very muddy but have dried up some to day I am very tired to night.

1 Caroline Fraser, PRAIRIE FIRES, The American Dreams of LAURA INGALLS WILDER, First Edition, 2017, pg. 116-117.

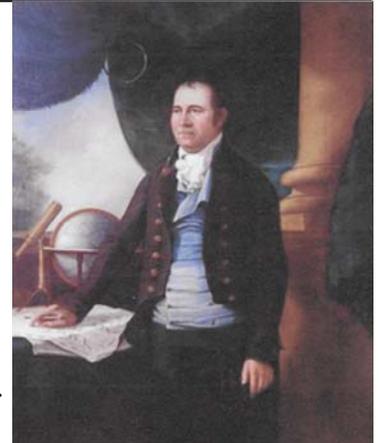
LAST MONTH'S MYSTERY PHOTO

BY ALLAN BUDDLE

The Photo is of Simeon DeWitt.

Please join the Backbone Ridge History Group at American Legion Post 770 in Trumansburg from 2 to 4 PM on May 5th to learn of the historic and legendary details of Simeon DeWitt's impact on Central New York as the wilderness was divided into Towns and Lots within towns to serve as payment for New York residents who served in the American Revolution.

In the spring of 1778 Simeon DeWitt was appointed one of about half a dozen assistant geographers under Robert Erskine, Geographer and Surveyor General of the United States of America. With the help of his assistants forwarding data to him from various battle areas, Erskine began turning out the first accurate maps of many of these areas.



On October 2, 1780, Robert Erskine died of a severe cold that he had contracted in September. Following Erskine's death Washington received many recommendations from his associates promoting one person or another to replace Erskine. When General Anthony Wayne recommended John W. Watkins, Washington replied: "I think it but a piece of candor to declare that I think myself obliged in justice to Mr. DeWitt, who has been long and constantly in the office, [and of whose abilities I have] heard [Mr. Erskine speak in very high terms] to recommend him to the vacancy occasioned by Mr. Erskine's death." Simeon DeWitt was appointed the second Surveyor General of the United States. As the war came toward an end, DeWitt requested authorization from Washington to prepare a complete map of "The State of War in America." Although Washington strongly approved such an undertaking, Congress was not ready to fund such a project.

On May 13, 1784, DeWitt resigned his position as Geographer of the United States to accept the position of Surveyor General of New York State, a position he would hold for over 50 years. He moved to Albany.

During his term as Surveyor General of New York, DeWitt mapped or re-mapped almost all of New York State. Established, older cities and towns were re-mapped to include more recent development, naming of unnamed streets, and layout of areas for new development. Much of New York State, however, had never been mapped including most of Central New York.

During the Revolutionary War, Congress had authorized the award of 100 acres to each volunteer who enlisted and served until discharged. New York State added 500 acres to the 100 already authorized by Congress. Neither Congress nor New York State had much money but they had a lot of land. The award of this much land would also encourage settlement and development of the vast open spaces.

A Military Tract of about 1.8 million acres was designated in Central New York to meet this commitment. The land extended from Lake Ontario south to the southern end of Seneca Lake and from the east line of Onondaga County (Syracuse) to Seneca Lake. It took DeWitt until 1790 to issue the first sheets of his *State Map of New York* but in it he divided this huge Military Tract into 28 townships each containing 100 lots of 600 acres each.

In 1790 the names of eligible soldiers were put into a box and a drawing was held to assign the plots. *The Balloting Book and Other Documents Relating to Military Bounty Lands, In the State of New York* was published in Albany and printed by Packard and Van Benthuisen in 1825.

In 1795, Simeon DeWitt named the little settlement at the head of Cayuga Lake "Ithaca" after the hometown of ancient Greece's hero Ulysses. He was so taken with the area that he and his family members started

Continued on page 5

LAST MONTH'S MYSTERY PHOTO

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)

purchasing large tracts of land. For the next ten years Ithaca was a remote community but roads were being constructed.

In 1810, DeWitt wrote from Albany that he was contemplating Ithaca as his future and permanent residence. DeWitt died in 1834, having served as New York's Surveyor General for over 50 years. DeWitt was originally buried in Ithaca but in 1844 he was moved to a vault in the Old Middle Dutch Church in Albany. In the 1890s he was moved to Albany Rural Cemetery. He is buried in Lot 30, Section 56.

Portrait of Simeon DeWitt (1804) by Ezra Ames; This article was excerpted from an entry posted in [History](#), [Military History](#) and tagged [Albany](#), [American Revolution](#), [Maps](#), [New Netherland](#) on [January 8, 2017](#) by [Peter Hess](#)

THIS MONTH'S MYSTERY PHOTO

Can you identify this and how it may have been used on the Backbone Ridge?

**SPRING ON THE BACKBONE RIDGE
1882 AND 1884**

CONTRIBUTED BY MARSHA SMITH, JULIE MORRIS AND ALLAN BUDDLE
(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

Tuesday 4 it has been pleasant all day I baked 3 dried apple pies this forenoon and quilted some this afternoon about 5 o'clock Gust baby and I went down to Edlas and got the churn of butter milk it rains hard to night we had an old yew that had twins lambs this morning and one was dead as she will die. Leroy toot the other lamb down to Jimmie to night



Wednesday 5 it has been quite cold and windy to day I did not do much this forenoon but to putter around the chitchen this afternoon I got Charlie to sleep and then went to Libs and took her a little milk that I got down to Edlas last night then I fixed one of my shoes sewed the sole on and put 2 patches on it I have got a terrible sore mouth my gums are sore where I had my teeth pulled and I have 5 big cancer sores in my mouth besides Charlie and Mother are both sick with a cold Gust is feeling some better than he was last week our old yew died last night.

Thursday 6 it has been cold all day and cloudy Gust helped Leroy draw a load of hay from Johns barn to day but he got very tired I have been fixing my other shoe to day am not feeling very well my mouth is very sore yet Charlie is feeling quite poorly to night and the rest is poorly too

Friday 7 it has been pleasanter to day we had a hard thunder shower last night about 12 o'clock Gust and I halve soled my shoes this afternoon Lib came down a while this afternoon baby is about sick to night I guess it is worms

Continued on page 6

SPRING ON THE BACKBONE RIDGE 1882 AND 1884

CONTRIBUTED BY MARSHA SMITH, JULIE MORRIS AND ALLAN BUDDLE
(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5)

Saturday 8 it has been pleasant and quite cool to day I baked bread ginger cookies and 2 pies this fore noon. Elder Ira Smith took dinner here he is staying at Dave Bonds he came there last night. Mother went up to Libs this afternoon and Gust and I took baby over to Dr. Traceys to get him some worm medican Dr was not at home but we found him at Mrs Traceys fathers Mr Johnsons. We staid there about ½ hour and got home just dark

Sunday 9 it has been plasant all day no one here we did not go to church to day Leroy did not come to do the chorse to night John helped Gust do them. My mouth is better to night it is quite cold to night

Monday 10 it has been cold and snowed most of the day it froze hard last night. I did my washing this forenoon but put the close to soak Mother has been sick all day with one of her heart speels. Ira Smith was here to dinner again to day no one here tonight

Tuesday 11 it has been a squally day. But I dried my cloths to day I quilted this afternoon. No one here to day or to night. Gust is feeling quite poorly his stomache is very bad indeed

Wednesday 12 it has been another cold blustry day. I have been quilting all day. Got my quilt done to night I am very tired to night. Ira Smith preaches at Steamburg to nigh no one went from here but Leroy

Thursday 13 it has been a little warmer today but is real cold yet. Leroy drove the steer down to Job Mckeels this forenoon Gust sold him to Mr Able for 6cts per lb he weighed (?) lbs and came to \$74.88

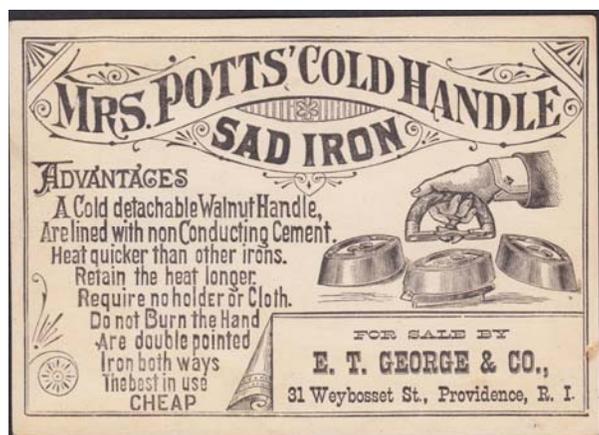
Friday 14 old champ had a colt last night it has been quite again to day. Snowed a little this afternoon. Gust and I went down to the store this forenoon and got some grocerys and 39 ½ yards of brown factory at 8 cts per yard it all came to \$5.00 52. I sewed up on sheet and mother one this afternoon no one here to day Mrs. Cyrus Barber is very sick and also little Hattie Auble. Timie Swick is almost sick two it is quite cold to night

Saturday 15 not quite as cold to day. Has not snowed any. Gust feeling trifled better to day so he walked up to Johns and got some butter. Our butter is just gone. Mother and I each sewed up a sheet this forenoon and I hemed 4 four sheets this afternoon

Sunday 16 it has been very pleasant all day but a cool north wind Louissa and Eva came here at 10 o'clock and staid until ½ past 5 Mrs Bumpers and Johny called here this afternoon a few moments to night Lib is down to Edlas. Edla has got a little baby girl it was born Friday night

Monday 17 it has been pleasant but very winday all day I did a large washing this forenoon. This afternoon wrote a letter to Dr Ingersoll of Corning (Gust talks of going there to be Docktered) and took it down to the office and got some muslin for Gust a shirt, he is not any better. I stoped at Daves a few moment when I came back mother ironed this afternoon I am very tired to night

Tuesday 18 it has been very pleasant all day it did a little of everything this forenoon and have been cutting out Gusts Shirt and working on it this afternoon. Mother walked down to Dave Bond and back this afternoon. Leroy commenced ploughing this morning in the field by the house.



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**SPRING ON THE BACKBONE RIDGE
1882 AND 1884**

CONTRIBUTED BY MARSHA SMITH, JULIE MORRIS AND ALLAN BUDDLE
(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6)

Wednesday 19 it was quite pleasant this forenoon but rained quite hard about noon and some this afternoon. Mr. Duglass of Newfield was here to dinner. I have been sewing some on Gusts shirt this afternoon did not get it done

Thursday 20 it has been quite cool to day and very windy I finished Gust shirt this afternoon no one here to-day it is cold to night

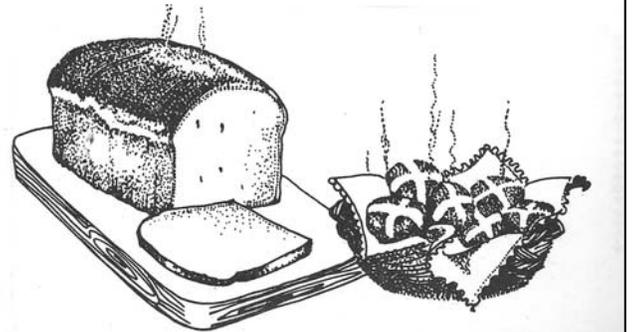
Friday 21 it has been snowing most of the day and is quite cold I put on a comfortable and tied about half of it no one here to day I am very tired to night

Saturday 22 a cold north wind but quite pleasant I finished my comfortable and washed out some shirt and collars for Gust this forenoon Getting him ready to go to corning. Saarah Huff here a while this afternoon we got a letter from Dr. Ingersoll tonight saying Gust could not come yet. Gust is very poorly he lays abed part of the time

Sunday 23 it has been pleasant but quite cold to day. Mother and Electa Bond went down to John Dessmond to day to see Grandpa. Eugene Swick Maise and Susy where here to dinner and also Mr Kellogg. Mother got home just night Charlie went up home a while with John this afternoon it is cold to night

Monday 24 it has been another windy day I did a large washing this forenoon. And mother and I did the ironing this afternoon. I am very tired and not feeling very well to night

Tuesday 25 north wind yet it froze quite hard last night but it has froze every night but one for over a week I bake 3 loaves of bread this forenoon and a cake this afternoon I have the headache to night it is cold again to night



Wednesday 26 it has been some warmer to day the wind has got in the south and it looks very much like rain. I walked down to the store this forenoon and then baked 4 biscuit. Mr. and Mrs Sissom where here this afternoon visiting also Lib. John has been dragging some to day east of the house with fan and Sally Maria. Sears here to day to see Gust.

Thursday 27 it has been a strong south wind again all day Mother and I went to John Desmund today. Then afterdinner went down to the burgh and done some trading I got so gorceries and a pair of wrapers for Gust and a pair of shoes for Charlie and a pair for myself mine was 18 shinnen and his 90 cts. It rained all of the time we were in the burg and until after we got home we come back by John Desmunds and brought Grandpa home with us. He has not been here before since last October Lib came down and staid with Gust and got dinner and supper

Friday 28 it has not been very warm to day or very pleasant has rained by spells all day. No one here to day Gusts stomach is feeling better but his shoulder is quite bad it aches all of the time. I have been fixing his new pants around the botton. Making them longer. Leroy is ploughing above the barn

Saturday 29 it has been a little warmer to day I swept and moped up stairs this forenoon and made 2 loaves of bread and scrubed the kitchen. Bill Tailby here to to day training Gipse. He was here to dinner and super I am very tired to night it is not as cold tonight

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SPRING ON THE BACKBONE RIDGE 1882 AND 1884

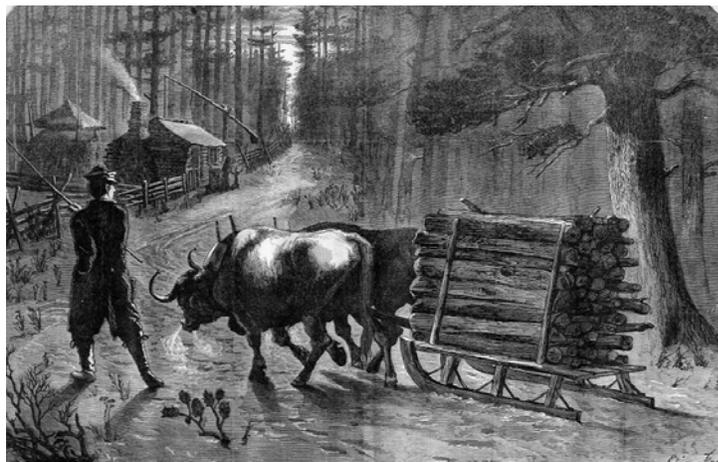
CONTRIBUTED BY MARSHA SMITH, JULIE MORRIS AND ALLAN BUDDLE
(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

Sunday 30 it has been quite warm to day Dave Charlie and Electa walked up here this forenoon Electa staid here while Dave and Charlie went up to Johns. Louisa and Eva came here after meeting and staid until after 5 o'clock it look like rain to night

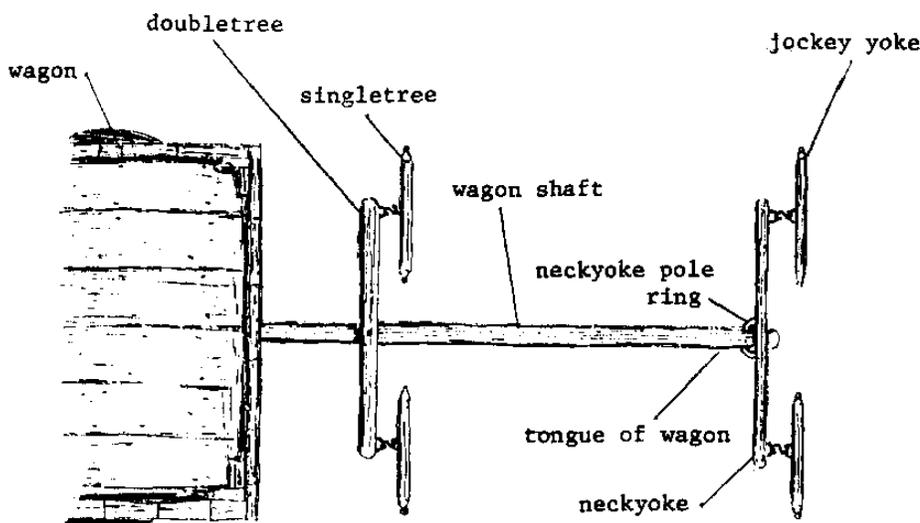
Diary of Herman T. Smith 1884

April 1 – A pleasant day. John and I split rails. Mother and Demma went up to D. H. Townsend's to see about getting some pigs. J. King and wife called. Harvey and Fanny Cole called in the forenoon. Getting cloudy and appears like a storm.

April 2 – A stormy day. John and I split rails in the forenoon. T. C. Tunison came up after my lumber wagon. I borrowed a wedge of him which he brought up with him. In the afternoon it snowed for certain. The first thunder of the season sounded today.



April 3 – A raw, windy day. Made a lever in the reaper, a tooth for the rakes, also a double whiffle-tree. In afternoon went uptown, took up the dung fork and had it mended. T. C. Tunison came up after a pail of butter-milk.



April 4 – A cool windy day. I went down to T. C. T.'s and borrowed is sleigh to draw manure. When drawing the eighth load broke my neck yoke and had to postpone. I set the remainder of posts along the lane. In the afternoon went to the woods and split rails. 63. Jack King's and L. K. Compton's daughters came down to see Mater weave. C. K. Yates stopped and gobbled up our stock of eggs.

April 5 – A cold windy day. Mother and I went to Farmer Village. I purchased a neck yoke. (\$5) John split rails in forenoon. In afternoon drew 13 loads of manure on the sled of T. C. T.'s. Wind blows hard from north-west and quite cold. I took down my rubber boots to get patched. Left them.

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**SPRING ON THE BACKBONE RIDGE
1882 AND 1884**

CONTRIBUTED BY MARSHA SMITH, JULIE MORRIS AND ALLAN BUDDLE
(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8)

April 6 – A pleasant day overhead but the roads are terrible. We do not attend church today. Alfred Gardner called and gave us our mail.

April 7 – A moderate day. John and myself drew manure in the forenoon. In the afternoon split rails. Jack King and wife came down after the carpet. He has commenced plowing down to the lake. My music instructor came, Louise Smith accompanied her.

April 8 – A very pleasant day. I went over to W. Boorum's to see about cutting the oaks for rails. John and I cut down and split 50 slashing rails. Mother went up to Wirt Rappleye's and made a call. Mr. Best called so the women say. Best you are no good. Quite tired this evening so will close. Mr. Herman Smith.

April 9 – A misty, muggy and moist day in general. John and myself continued splitting rails, now have 480 split. Sawed this first oak all up but have one cut to split yet.

April 10 – A rainy day. John and myself split rails in forenoon. In the afternoon cut out bar posts. T. C. Tunison came up after some milk. I went up after the mail. John received a check from Wilbur of \$50.

April 11 – A pleasant day. John and myself split rails. I do not fill these pages as I used to. What seems to be the matter, is it because there is nothing happening worth putting down or is it because I can't remember what happens one week behind the times?

April 12 – An extra fine day. John and myself split rails. Demma and Mater went up to John Farr's. Roads are terrible. Elisha Covert and wife called to see about getting a carpet wove.

April 13 - Another extra fine day. We do not attend church this morning, at night John went up a horseback.

April 14 – A continuation of the previous day's weather. John and I hauled manure. Mater walked up to L. K. Compton's. J. King called and brought more rags. My music instructor came and gave a lesson. Looks like a storm.

April 15 – A windy day. I commenced plowing on the hill field. Plowed until 8 o'clock and the rain stopped my fun. Came up and by ten it stopped for I went to drawing manure. In the afternoon I continued to plowing. Mother walked up to L. K. Compton's. The wind has fell and now rain is falling fast and unceasingly. This the first of plowing for this spring.

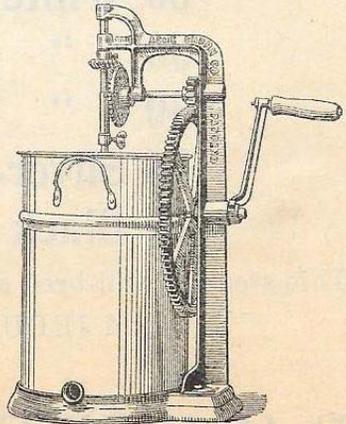
April 16 – A rainy, threatening day. I plowed until the rain stopped me. Mrs. Rogers called in the afternoon. Jehial Smith came and staid all night. Broke his fills when attempting to draw his cart in the barn. Mrs. Farr and Eva came in from Farmer Village stopped and staid all night. It rains very hard. Mother engaged Mrs. Farr's horse to work as a third nag.

—THE WONDERFUL—
Acme Churn

SAVES TIME, LABOR
AND PATIENCE

The most modern and up-to-date churn on the market. 5 to 10 minutes all the time required.
Fuller description in Southern Planter April, May and June 1903. Write for prices, stating size wanted.

THE ACME CHURN,
Lock Box 311. Richmond, Va.



Continued on page 10

SPRING ON THE BACKBONE RIDGE 1882 AND 1884

CONTRIBUTED BY MARSHA SMITH, JULIE MORRIS AND ALLAN BUDDLE
(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

April 17 – A misty foggy and unpleasant day in general. I went down to Farmer Village in the lumber wagon, carried Jehial's rags to the depot, accompanied by Jehial himself. Took down 13 pounds of butter and sold it at .20. Purchased 27.6 feet of Hemlock lumber to put in a ditch, a pick, and also obtained my rubber boots which I took to get patched some time ago. T. C. Tunison came up after some milk. Wirt Rappleye came down after a barrel of swill. Mrs. Farr and daughter went home. Jehiel also made himself scarce. Hez Gardner called. Rains quite hard. John and I commenced the ditch east of the barn.

April 18 – A continuation of yesterday's weather. I ditched. George Compton came down and brought some carpet material. Hez Gardner called. John laid and also went up after the mail. I received a letter from David.

April 19 - A continuation of same kind of weather with indications for more. I worked in the ditch. John went up to Ed Boyer's and up to see Robert Medlock about helping ditch. Could not get him.
April 19, 1904- Twenty years more of my life has passed. How little we know what the future has in store for us.



April 20 – A continuation of the same kind of weather previously alluded to only more so. We do not attend church at all today. I went down to T. C. Tunison's and spent the forenoon. Found them all well and sent us a pail of apples quite a delicacy of the season. It is snowing.

April 21 – Another day of the same kind of weather spoken of last Thursday only colder and the ground covered with snow. I worked in the ditch. Mater walked over to Peter Mannings to see him about finishing the ditch. He is coming. This afternoon was quite decent weather considering.

5/9/1937 This was the first ditch to be put in on this farm by the Smith family and it operates yet.

April 22 – A very pleasant day. John loaded and I worked in the ditch, Hez Gardner brought down some carpet rags.

April 23 – An extra fine day. John went to Geneva. I plowed and drew corn out of the field by the brook. Used John Farr's horse one half of a day. Mrs. Gardner called to see about her carpet.

April 24 – A very fine day. I drew tow loads of corn and then hitched in John's horse and went to Lodi Landing after tile. Took four bushels of wheat to Howel's and got it ground. Found that no tile was this side of Seneca. Ate dinner at Mr. A. Covert's. Carrie Compoton came down and made a call. John came home. He hitched up Farr's horse and took him home. Took Flora up and had her shoes pulled off. Mrs. Dr. Tunison died this morning.



Continued on page 11

**SPRING ON THE BACKBONE RIDGE
1882 AND 1884**

CONTRIBUTED BY MARSHA SMITH, JULIE MORRIS AND ALLAN BUDDLE
(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10)

April 25 – This is a fine day. John plowed, I cleaned or dug on the open ditch west of the house. Peter Manning came at 11 to stone the ditch. John postponed plowing and went to drawing stone. I worked in the ditch.

April 26 – A very fine day. I plowed on the field south of the orchard. Peter Manning came over and stoned the remainder of the ditch. Demma went over to Mrs. Tunison's funeral. A crowd out. Alas! We are all on our road to the same narrow house to which she has gone or been lain.

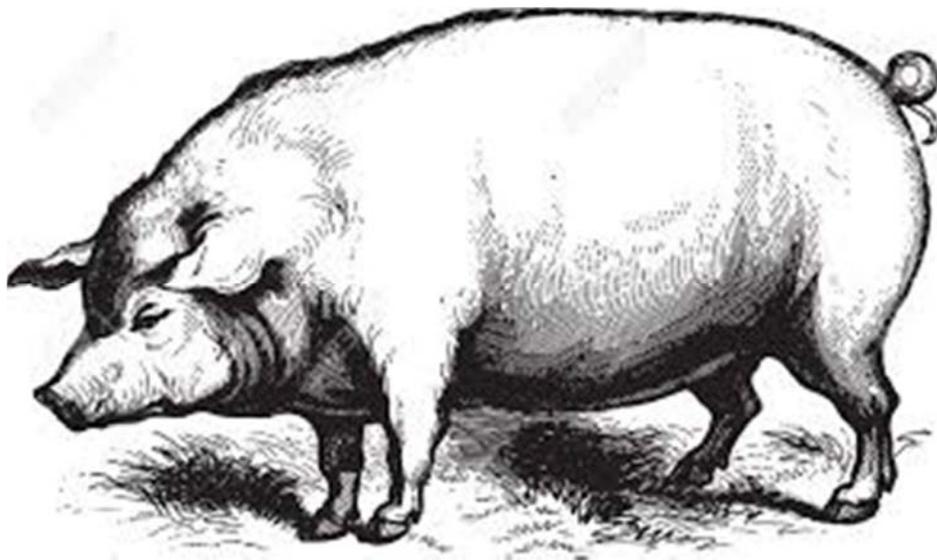
April 27 – A very fine day. There is no meeting today. In the afternoon Mother and I went up to Mr. Medlock's.



April 28 – A fine day. I plowed on the field by the brook.

April 29 – A cool day. I plowed on the field by the brook. John went up to Wirt's and caught a pig which Mother engaged today by going up to said place. T. C. Tunison came up after some swill. Mother went down to T. C. Tunisons. John and I finished drawing corn out of the field by the brook. E. F. Gardner sowed barley.

April 30 – A fine day. I finished plowing the field by the brook and commenced on the field east of the house. The pig which we purchased of Wirt jumped out of the pen and skipped. John skipped after it and found it. John King called. Frank Hall called or stopped to see if we had some spring wheat.



Thank you to Mary Jean Welser, Marty Schlabach and Kari Milliman Gauntt for the images in the diaries.

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We hope that information contained in the Backbone continues to be of interest and we welcome suggestions for content related to the history of the Backbone Ridge and surrounding communities. Please feel free to contact us with suggestions or contributions of articles by mail at the address above or through the website at that address above.

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