



The Backbone

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

BECAUSE HISTORY MATTERS

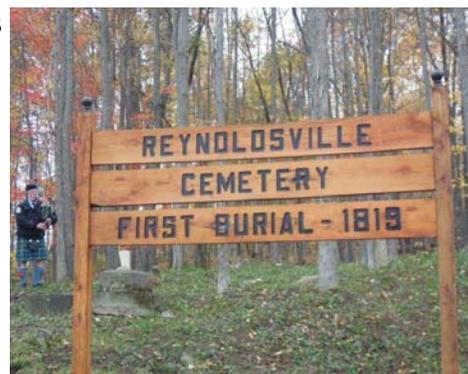
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RETURNING TO REYNOLDSVILLE CEMETERY

BY ALLAN BUDDLE

You can now see it from the road! Several years of work on spring and fall weekends at the Reynoldsville Cemetery are beginning to show dramatically. Along with the work, a new sign was installed and there was a service to rededicate the cemetery to honor over 200 individuals who are buried there with the earliest burial in 1819.



Now with the help of Robert Kibbee a project is underway to create a map of the cemetery to assist those searching for family members. In creating this map the cemetery has been divided into zones, and then individual markers will be located within each zone by a number which then is identified on an accompanying chart with the name of the individual and other information that appears on the stone. When complete, folded up paper copies of the maps and charts will be placed in a box attached to a post of the cemetery sign.

Please join us for our next Cemetery Clean Up Day!

WHEN: May 19 and 20

Work begins at xx and goes till xx

Items to bring: gloves, boots, mosquito spray,

Please wear appropriate footwear

Weather permitting or Even if it rains

For more information contact:

At the annual Membership Meeting of the Backbone Ridge History Group, individuals are elected to serve as trustees; some extending terms which are currently expiring and others filling vacancies. We will be forever grateful to David Beckhorn and Denise Teeter, two individuals who gave so much of themselves in discovering and sharing knowledge of those who lived and toiled on the Backbone Ridge. We are also grateful to Julia Clawson, Kelly Paonessa Terry and Gerard Messmer who continue to preserve and celebrate the history each in their own way. Julie faithfully carried out the Treasurer's duties for many years. Gerry deserves special mention for his skills as Secretary for many years. In her trail riding program, Kelly shares the history of many of the families whose farmstead foundations they pass while riding the trails on the Backbone Ridge. Rose Smith deserves special recognition for her expertise and diligence as membership Chairperson. A big THANK YOU to all!

I would also like to take this opportunity to introduce four individuals who have been newly elected as trustees: Mark Brown, Maria Kennedy, David Townsend and Erica Townsend.

Mark Brown's family has lived in Lodi since about 1840, with other branches of his family here much earlier. His career has inclined toward music and is currently the pianist for Hector and Lodi Presbyterian Churches. In retirement he has delved into the history of many local families in Hector and Lodi and has a goal of opening the BRHG Research Center on a routine schedule and assisting visitors with their searches.

Maria Kennedy is the Folk Arts Coordinator at the ARTS Council of the Southern Finger Lakes. She has been working in the field of Folklore for many years beginning with a summer job at Conner Prairie Living History Museum as a teenager. She has pursued an MA and PhD in Folklore from Indiana University. Before coming to The ARTS Council, she worked at Traditional Arts Indiana and the Institute for Digital Arts and Humanities at Indiana University. Maria sees parallels in some of the work that she is doing at the Arts Council with that of the BRHG.

David Townsend is retired from a career in police Work and as a Paramedic. His Townsend Family dates back to the beginning of settlement in both Schuyler and Seneca Counties and he has done much family research contributing Civil War Dairies of John Wesley Townsend to the BRHG for placement on the website. David has accepted the office of Secretary for the BRHG.

Erica Townsend is working toward a degree in Special Education and is at home now raising two active boys. In her "spare" time she has immersed herself into family genealogy and has accepted the office of Treasurer for the BRHG.



Photo from BRHG and Searsburg Grange co-sponsored concert—Uncle Joe and the Rosebud Ramblers.

FEEDBACK FROM SPECIAL EDITION NEWSLETTER, MAR 2017

BY ALLAN BUDDLE

The articles describing the Military Tract, Towns and Lots generated a record amount of responses. We want to sincerely thank Sylvia Hasenkopf and Robert Kibbee for the articles and let you know that this is just the beginning as historical landownership, economics, ecology and social structure related to farms, homes, schools, religious pursuits and businesses is organized by Military Lot and made available through the use of modern communication tools and in the old fashioned paper way.

As an example the table presented on Pg. 10 of the Special Edition is reproduced below and extended with one additional column. (From The Balloting Book)

<u>Twp</u>	<u>Lot</u>	<u>Ballotee</u>	<u>Patent to whom delivered</u>
Ovid	89	Henry M'Henry, dead	Richard Edwards, administrator
Ovid	90	Isaac Sherwood, Lt.	Jasper Cropsey
Ovid	91	John English, dead	Henry Platner for Killian Hogeboom
Ovid	92	Thomas Hoskins, dead	Richard Edwards, administrator
Ovid	93	Jacob Cline, dead	W. J. Vrendenburgh for Joseph Bindon, administrator
Ovid	94	Christian Walliser	Himself
Ovid	95	Christopher K. Bedner, dead	Richard Edwards, administrator
Ovid	96	James Rankin	M. Hoffman for Bleecker's executors
Hector	1	Reserved for Gospel	
Hector	2	Aaron Osburn	Major Connolly
Hector	3	James Reiley	William Cockburn
Hector	4	Thomas Coshal	John Lawrence, Esq.
Hector	5	Hugh Fothergill	Abraham Jones
Hector	6	Reserved for Gospel	
Hector	7	Daniel Niven, Capt.	Alexander Alexander
Hector	8	Sebastion Bauman, Maj.	Himself
Hector	9	Richard Smith	Himself

Grandfather's Barn

By Barbara Bell

The days when we lived in the city
And Grandfather lived on the farm,
My castle-in-Spain resembled the most
An old-fashioned barn.

The drone of the bees on a hot summer day
In the haymow would lull me to sleep,
And the whirr of the busy barn swallows a-wing
Lent a harmony pleasing and sweet.

At chore time the moo of the gentle brown cows
Was answered by voices of men
As they brought in the pails and took down the stools
And started the milking again.

To sleep in the hay was a good treat
With the moon gleaming gold through the door
And a quizzical owl keeping watch overhead
Like the spirit of fun gone before.

To awake with the dawn glowing pink in the east
And hear the cock crow on the fence!
Such joy and contentment in my soul felt within
Was a rapture I've seldom known since.

If heaven is planned to satisfy all--
And somehow I think it may be--
I hope there will stand, in some heavenly field,
An old-fashioned red barn for me.



LAST EDITION'S MYSTERY PHOTOS

The Great Sod Farm Mystery

By Ken Pickens, Trumansburg

In 1941, Phil White of Mecklenburg (founder of White Nursery), was awarded a contract by the U.S. Navy to supply the new naval training base at Sampson on Seneca Lake with sod for its parade ground and 14 acres of drill fields. Five thousand new recruits were scheduled to begin their training for what was to become World War II. White, facing a shortage of available local labor, sent his friend and co-worker Tony Babcock to New York City to hire men looking for work to come to the rural countryside to cut sod, load it on pallets, and ship it to the naval base on trucks.

The two dozen or so men lived in basic cabins near the sod farm, many expressing fear and loneliness in the great quiet darkness of the land known to locals as the Backbone Ridge. Yet, needing the work, they carried on for two to three months of backbreaking, muddy labor, some even deciding to stay and settle in the area after their shift was over (Karen White Allen, "Backbone Ridge and the Mecklenburg Connection: US Navy Sod Farm").

Several good photos remain of the men, their small houses, and their work on the farm. But a mystery remains: Where exactly *was* the sod farm? Perhaps not the most earth shattering of mysteries, but one that is interesting to the Backbone Ridge History Group. In last December's edition we shared some pictures asking readers for help to nail down the actual location and have received much information. We still have no definitive answer.

In early April I joined Dick Compton, Karen Allen, and Allan Buddle around his kitchen table to pore over more photos, descriptions and early maps looking for clues that would direct us to the site. The clues? We know from the pictures it was relatively flat land (a rare feature on the Backbone Ridge). Is that the lake we



LAST MONTH'S MYSTERY PHOTO (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)

see in the distance, or could it be snow? Dick says his father remembered the trucks rumbling up through Lodi Center, so could it be near Lodi Center Road? We know it all happened on public land, now part of the Finger Lakes National Forest, so any property listed as privately owned in 1941 is eliminated. Look at this photo through the magnifying glass. Is that a steeple and house on the horizon, or a giant pine?

After quite a few cookies provided by Ann Buddle, and a lot of talking and reminiscing (was that the House property or the A-House property?), we settled on a few possibilities, and made a plan for Allan and me to take his four wheel drive truck for some exploration. So, on a cool and cloudy April morning this week, we drove sections of Seneca, Parmenter, Wilkens, Traphagen, Crisfield, and Lodi Center Road, just to name a few. As we came to the pasture at the corner of Parmenter and 137 near Lodi Center, we spotted a field that looked strangely familiar and pulled over to walk around in the soggy grassland. The land lays flat, the shape of the field seems to match the photo, but would you have been able to see the lake or those buildings on the horizon back then? We wandered through the fence rows looking for some sign or artifact from the early camp, but found nothing. "Well, it's a strong candidate," we decided. But then, traveling on, we spotted another flat field near the corner of Seneca and Elkins Roads that also had many of the features we were looking for.

So, here's where we need the help of our readers and long time residents. What else do you know about the sod farm and its specific location? Let's take all of our old photos and the clues we have so far to see if we can determine the specific location of the sod farm between 1941 and 1942. Our own Backbone Mystery, well worth unraveling!

Editors Note: Additional photos from Sod Farm are on pages 6, 8,9

Ken Pickens
Trumansburg

THIS MONTH'S MYSTERY PHOTO

Can you identify this contraption and explain why it might have been important to some of the farmsteads on the Backbone Ridge?



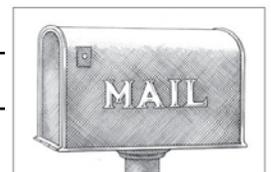
BACKBONE RIDGE HISTORY GROUP'S INFORMATION UPDATES

Have you checked out the BRHG Website yet? If you have some time, go to www.backboneridgehistorygroup.com

Do we have any updates?



MAIL BAG



Shortly after the December, 2016 issue of the *Backbone* was mailed two messages were received. Dick Compton who is one of the people gathered around the table to talk about the Sampson Sod Farm called to advise that his family had modified their hay trucks to haul sod from the Sod Farm to Sampson.

On the same day we received a message through the BRHG website from Clyde Switzer which you can read below.

The construction of Sampson Navy Base required a lot of labor and materials from the area. I believe this photo is one of the sod cutting operation on Resettlement land to supply lawns for the base. My wife's father, Chris Dean was hired (with his team of horses) for this job. He lived on the N/W corner of Searsburg & Vesa roads.

Phil White of Mecklenburg supervised the labor force for this undertaking, which was large and was recruited by him in New York City. I suggest you contact his daughter Karen Allen or his son Phil White Jr. They might have more information. As you know Phil was a history buff and kept copious records.

Good Luck, Clyde and Elsie Switzer

FREE CONCERT

Fiddling on the Backbone Ridge

2 PM

MAY 7th, 2017

Reynoldsville Community Club

(State Rt. 227 in Reynoldsville)



Uncle Joe and the Rosebud Ramblers offers a mix of lively up tempo New England fiddle tunes, energetic old time tunes from before the Civil War and family oriented traditional folk songs that have stood the test of time. Music will be enhanced with history of the instruments.

Co-sponsored by the Backbone Ridge History Group and

Reynoldsville Community Club

For more information call 607-532-4213

Donations gratefully accepted



When the "Big Drought" Comes

The Dry Weather of 7000 A. D. Already Causes Concern

[General Science]

As this planet's polar ice cap retreats northward—which it is apparently doing—the rainfall of the northern continents will be correspondingly lessened. Oceans will become fuller, winds milder, and a great desert will cover most of North America and Europe. This condition will probably be reached within five thousand years.

THEY are nothing to laugh at—the widespread drought of 1934 and the dust storms of 1935—but they will be forgotten by the year 7000 A. D. The Big Drought will then be a reality.

Something will undoubtedly be done to check the loss of surface soil over the areas shown in our map. Countless tons of fertile earth have been scoured away by savage winds, and whirled eastward even as far as the Atlantic Coast. Practically everyone who lives east of the Rocky Mountains has breathed part of a dust storm within recent weeks.

A plan for plowing deep ridges about ten feet apart, bringing up the clay to catch and hold the dust, is being actively pursued, with sympathetic Uncle Sam buying the gasoline. The land is then to be planted in grass—Nature's own scheme that has held the prairie soil for centuries. By spending a million dollars the dust will probably be laid throughout much of the West.

But all the money in the world will not stop the coming of the Big Drought!

The Ice Ages

Dr. William J. Humphreys, veteran scientist of the U. S. Weather Bureau, undoubtedly feels that he is giving timely warning of the dry weather that will cover the northern continents by the year 7000 A. D. This forward view of approximately five thousand years is longer than the backward view that written history affords. The geologist, however, and his scientific associates read this planet's history in the rocks. It is positively known that about 25,000 years ago a mile-thick glacier covered most of North America and Europe. The Ohio River marks the southern border of this great ice cap in our eastern States; the edge was not so far south over the western lands.

This ice cap was merely the last of several chill sheets that came and went about 30,000 to 40,000 years apart. Today more ice is melting in the Far North than is freezing. Year by year—so slowly that the average person does not notice it—the climate of the Northern



—Courtesy New York Times
WHERE THE DUST STORMS ORIGINATE

Hemisphere is growing warmer. The ice cap that still covers the Arctic is becoming thinner, and the area of perpetual snow smaller, as time goes on.

Calm and Dry

As the polar regions grow warmer there will be less difference between the Torrid and the Frigid Zones. Winds—stirred because of unequal temperatures—will become milder. There will be less moisture swept up and carried

through the air; there will be fewer clouds, more sunshine, greater calms, drought. The water now locked up in ice, and that poured upon the soil, will gather in the ocean—and remain there. The level of the sea will rise approximately 150 feet, which will cover what is left of New York City except for the spires of the taller buildings. Whether this "Venice of America" will then be inhabited we cannot predict.

Deserting the Desert

Over the inland regions Drought and Dust will reign supreme. There is little likelihood, according to Dr. Humphreys, that men will have invented a way to "make rain"; the water will not be in the sky. By the time these lands, in both North America and Europe, have become deserts, mankind will have migrated to the tropics (where it will still rain) and to the borders of the Arctic (where waters may be led southward by irrigation).

Man has migrated often. There has always been some reason for his moving, either by families or tribes. But somewhere between the Droughts of the Twentieth Century and the Dessication of the Seventieth Century there will be the greatest trek of human history. Civilized Humanity—though running from every shower—must be rained upon to survive!



ADDITIONAL PHOTOS FROM SOD FARM

Cutting sod



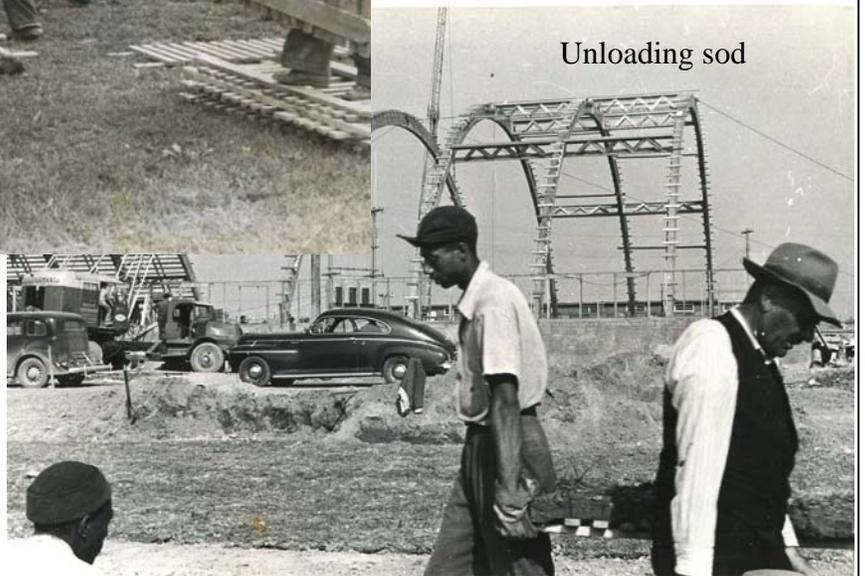
Stacking sod on pallets



Forking sod



Unloading sod



Backbone Ridge History Group
PO Box 62
Trumansburg, NY 14886

*****PLEASE NOTE CHANGE IN PO BOX NUMBER FROM 64 TO 62*****

Trustees:

Mark Brown, Maria Kennedy, David Townsend and Erica Townsend

Officers:

Allan Buddle, President; vacant, Vice President; Gerard Messmer, Secretary; Julie Clawson, Treasurer.
Newsletter Designer/Editor, Kari Milliman Gauntt; Daniel Huston, Webmaster

Trustee meetings are held at 1:00 pm on the third Monday of each month at the Backbone Ridge History Research Center at the intersection of Route 96A and SR 414 in the Village of Lodi.

WWW.BACKBONERIDGEHISTORYGROUP.COM

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