



# The Backbone

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

B E C A U S E   H I S T O R Y   M A T T E R S

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THE BACKBONE RIDGE HISTORY GROUP PRESENTS:

## COME ENJOY A FUN AFTERNOON AT THE LOGAN COMMUNITY CENTER!

FREE!

**SUNDAY, JULY 15TH 3 PM**

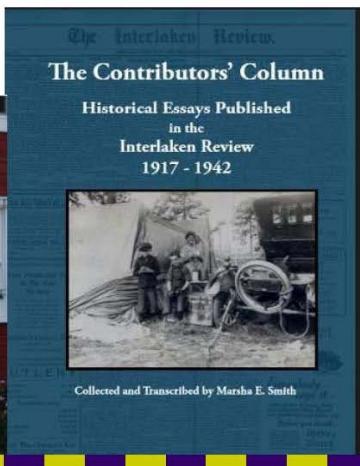
WE ARE CELEBRATING THE COMPLETION OF A DECADES-LONG PROJECT BY MARSHA SMITH TO COLLECT, TRANSCRIBE AND PUBLISH BACKBONE RIDGE FAMILY HISTORY THAT APPEARED IN CONTRIBUTORS' COLUMNS BETWEEN 1917 AND 1942.

MARSHA WILL SHARE SOME OF THE STORIES AND SOME AMUSING ANECDOTES ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS THEMSELVES. FOLLOWING THE STORY TELLING, MARSHA WILL AUTOGRAPH COPIES OF THE BOOK WHICH WILL BE AVAILABLE AT A SPECIAL RATE.

THEN UNCLE JOE AND THE ROSEBUD RAMBLERS WILL ENTERTAIN WITH THEIR COLLECTION OF TOE-TAPPING, OLD-TIMEY BANJO AND FIDDLE MUSIC.

RELAX, ENJOY SOME COOL REFRESHMENTS AND SOCIALIZING WITH YOUR NEIGHBORS!

SUPPORTED BY THE NELSON B. DELAVAN FOUNDATION



It is with great pleasure that we announce a celebration of the Backbone Ridge Family as documented in the recently released book- *The Contributors' Column, Historical Essays Published in the Interlaken Review, 1917 – 1942*. These essays were collected and transcribed by Marsha Smith over a 20 year period. The essays present in a colorful and good natured way, the local history of the Backbone Ridge area and some wonderful stories of far flung traveling experiences by automobile. As shown on the cover of this issue of the *Backbone*, Marsha will be at the Logan Community Center, beginning at 3 PM on Sunday, July 15, to share her experience in creating this book and some entertaining family stories related to the contributors. Following her presentation the books will be available at a reduced rate and Marsha will add her souvenir signature. Uncle Joe and the Rosebud Ramblers will then entertain with some toe-tapping banjo and fiddle music for which they are so well known. We are grateful to the Nelson B. Delavan Foundation for their support in making these Columns available for everyone to enjoy.

Change is normal and has come to the Backbone Ridge History Group again. In January, 2018 the Board of Trustees elected a new President, Maria Kennedy, Folklorist with the Arts Council of the Southern Finger Lakes. Since that time Maria was awarded her Doctorate and subsequently accepted a position at Rutgers University in New Jersey. She will be leaving shortly following the Fiddlers Gathering at Lakewood Winery near Watkins Glen.

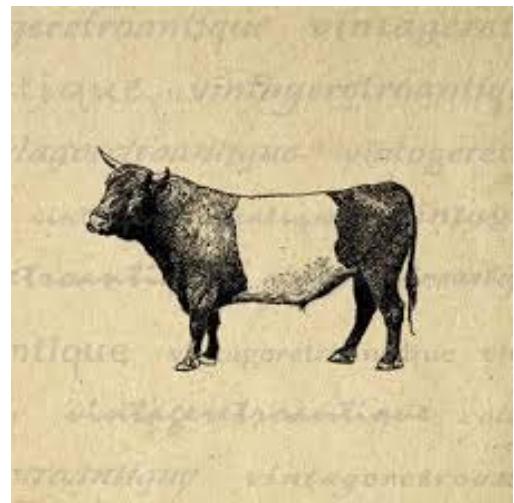
Maria provided some new and interesting insights into management and programming for the BRHG. It is an understatement to say that she will be missed. On behalf of the Board of Trustees, please accept our thank you Maria for your contributions. Best wishes in your new position.

Significant progress is being made on Military Lots digital data base development. Please see related progress report and the insert titled *The New Military Tract in New York State*.



Cleanup and maintenance continued at the Reynoldsville Cemetery on June 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>. Please see accompanying photos with captions.

Archival work at the Research Center located at the north end of the Backbone Ridge in Lodi, is continuing. An early product of that effort will be a list of books and papers available for study, organized into the six periods of Backbone Ridge History- Native American, Settlement, Peak Population, Agricultural and Home Mechanization, Resettlement, National Forest and Cattle Grazing. We are pleased to announce that the Backbone Ridge History Group has been awarded a grant from the Nelson B. Delavan Foundation for the creation of a six-panel exhibit structure that will demonstrate the Backbone Ridge History in those same six time periods listed above. Local artist Christopher Wolff will create an image at the top of each panel to reflect the history of that time period.



Editors Note- Thank you to Marty Schlabach for sharing a portion of this 1938 issue of the Proceedings of the New York State Horticultural Society. This is the time period during which the Resettlement Administration of the New Deal was active in removing over one-hundred farm families from lands considered at that time to be Marginal or Sub-marginal. Those lands were either reforested or converted to grazing lands. Recent research and analysis questions the conclusion that these lands could not be productive and in fact there is documentation that the Backbone Ridge Farming Community was in fact adjusting to changing markets. Unfortunately, the decision to not extend electrical service, and not to improve the roads and schools, which the farmers had no control over, ensured the removal of the farm families and the burning and bulldozing of all the homes and farm buildings. Comments on this article will be much appreciated and can be sent to The Backbone Ridge History Group, PO Box 62, Trumansburg, New York 14886.

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Those of you who were born on a farm, or who have worked on a farm in your earlier life or perhaps all your life, know the importance of a healthy prosperous agriculture.

You know that life on the farm is not easy. It never has been and it never will be. If it were not for the ambition that still remains in the hearts and muscles of our country, we would not have that reservoir of bright, ambitious, capable and hard working young people who continue to attain positions of high influence in our business and economic life in our rural communities.

Ease is not the goal of the farmer and his family. In fact, he scarcely knows the meaning of the word. The goal of the farmer has changed but little since the white man wrested the land from the Indians about three centuries ago. However, life on the farm in the pioneer days required so much physical effort to merely feed and clothe the family that it is doubtful if the pioneer family had much time to think about better rural living.

During the last score of years farm people have had time to give thought to better living and many changes have been brought about. Aside from modernization of farm homes, better rural living is largely involved with public problems. The problem of establishing improved schools, secondary roads, electric power lines, public health service and stability on the farm is largely beyond the control of the individual farmer. Farmers have built organizations of various types in order that he may do collectively what he cannot do individually.

Greater permanency in farming is likewise essential to better rural living for the public cannot afford to create these services on a temporary basis. Economic use of land is essential to a permanent agriculture. Unfortunately thousands of acres of land in New York State were stripped of forest cover when they were poorly adapted soils.

Lands which are capable of remaining permanently in farming need to be properly equipped with improved roads, electric power lines and good schools. Much progress has been made in road improvements in the last few years. It is recognized that farms equipped with dirt roads are socially and economically handicapped. With poor roads, marketing of farm produce and hauling of farm's supplies is more difficult and costly. During the rainy season it is difficult to get to school and medical service and mail delivery is uncertain.

Electric power today is almost a necessity to better living. Remarkable progress has been made in electrification of farm homes in the last few years. Almost seven thousand farms received electrical power during the year 1936 in this state.

<sup>1</sup> Proceedings of the 83<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting of the New York State Horticultural Society, January, 1938 (cont'd on page 4)

## BETTER RURAL LIVING<sup>1</sup>

BY KENNETH JORGENSEN, GENEVA  
(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

Education is very essential to better rural living. Out of every four rural young people, one becomes a full time farmer, one a part time farmer and the other two engage in activities other than farming. Thus it is important to both the country and city that rural young people be well trained. Much has been accomplished in the improvement of school systems in the rural areas and most boys and girls in this state have the opportunity to obtain a reasonably good education.

Years ago farm people had little cash income. They cut lumber. Raised some sheep, grew some oats and some hay. They had a garden, a few chickens, and a cow. They got what money they needed from their lumber, wool, and lambs and perhaps some from their home-made butter and cheese. It was just enough to get along with. They were happy and satisfied. They had little need for money then because the farm furnished almost everything that the family needed. Taxes were low; they had no movies to see, no radios to listen to, few magazines and books to read and most important of all no gasoline or cars to buy and maintain. As I said a few minutes ago, there was little demand for cash with which to buy. Today we have telephones, improved roads, electricity, automobiles, radios, movies, canned food, store bread and many other things all of which require cash to operate and secure. Therefore the need for a cash income has increased in order to maintain these standards of rural living that we have created. We must provide for this cash income needed today and increase it for tomorrow.

There are several ways that this can be done. One way is by farming the better farms better, more economically and efficiently. Another way is by eliminating the marginal farms and marginal farmers, who during surplus years have plenty of produce but prices are low and they get little for what they do have. During the years of high demand of farm produce they have nothing to sell and therefore they are out again. They are not benefiting themselves and surely not farmers on the better farms.

Another way that we can provide for a great cash income is by having better farm systems. This can be done by cutting down the spread between the producer and the consumer, by standardizing the products and creating a demand for a certain high grade product.

The greatest need for New York farmers today is organization and that is what we lack. The New York State Commissioner of Agriculture, Holton V. Noyes, stated in a recent address that New York farmers are many years behind in this important matter of organization. Right before our eyes is being enacted the tragedy of the failure to unite, to organize and cooperate into one great and important industry. For example, the state of Washington organized and is outselling the New York apple on our own apple market. Noyes pointed out that selfishness and use of organization on the part of the producer, the distributor and consumer is the reason why the farmer does not get the prices that he wants today.

Perhaps some of you think that we are too near to market to successfully organize but we have big cooperatives that are steadily climbing a grade. For example, the market of Menands, located a short distance from Albany, is in every sense of the word a going concern proving the possibilities of a genuine agricultural team work.

This Menands Market is a rectangular twenty-five acre field located on the bank of the Hudson River. It a farmers' market in every sense of the word, and almost seven hundred farmers have backed the enterprise with not only their money but also their individual cooperation in effecting its success.

A recent article in the Democrat and Chronicle states that down in Mexico, one million beggars demand better begging conditions and an eight hour day. If the beggars of Mexico can profit through organization it is certain that the farmers of this country should realize the value of cooperative effort.

(continued on page 5)

## BETTER RURAL LIVING <sup>1</sup>

BY KENNETH JORGENSEN, GENEVA  
(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)

In conclusion, let me urge you as interested members of one of the old and tried organizations in the state of New York- This New York State Horticultural Society- let me urge you in the cause of better rural living for yourselves and your children to bend your earnest efforts to the end that powerful organization may be achieved and stand as a bulwark of defense for the farmers of tomorrow

## MILITARY LOT DATABASE PROGRESS

CONTRIBUTED BY ALLAN BUDDLE

With the assistance of a number of volunteer transcribers, Robert Kibbee is creating several layers of data for placement on the digital database which when ready, will be accessible by smart phone or computer. The volunteers are meeting every other Wednesday morning at the Trumansburg Library. Layers of data identified and in the process of being transcribed for each Lot so far include:

Names of the Revolutionary Soldiers, and their rank and unit, who were granted a Military Lot of 600 acres for their service.

Name of the person who received the patent since many of the soldiers had died.

Survey notes for each Military Lot based on a 1789-90 survey by Peter Cuddeback and on notes from the 1980's by Peter Marks whose primary interest was a description of the landscape.

Future layers will include land transfers within each Lot from early deeds, providing an evolving record of landowners. These records will provide a source of genealogical information, as well as additional data. This data will be overlayed onto a Google Earth type map with current road names for orientation.

Many thanks to the following for assisting with transcriptions: Julie Morris, Judy Butterfield, June Szabo, Rebecca Wright, Charlotte Dickens, Beth Bevars and Allan Buddle.

## LAST MONTH'S MYSTERY PHOTO

The Gunter Chain would have been used to survey the Military Lots in the New Military Tract.

In 1620 an English mathematician and astronomer named Edmund Gunter described a surveyor's chain with 100 links, measuring 66 feet (22 yards or 4 poles) overall. By this design, one square chain equals 484 square yards, ten square chains equal an acre, and eighty chains equal a mile. Gunter's design proved extremely popular in English lands. This example belonged to John Johnson (1771-1841), the Surveyor General of Vermont. It is made of steel, with round handles at either end, brass tallies every 10 links, and swivels every 25 links. Each link is joined to the next by three rings, and each unit (link and three rings) is 7.92 inches long.



**PHOTOGRAPHS FROM REYNOLDSVILLE CEMETERY PROJECT  
SATURDAY, JUNE 2, 2018**



A large tree fell over in the cemetery in April that had to be cut up and removed.



The weedeaters—Allan Buddle and Sharon Ricci



Doris Pike placed flags on all the graves of the veterans for Memorial Day.

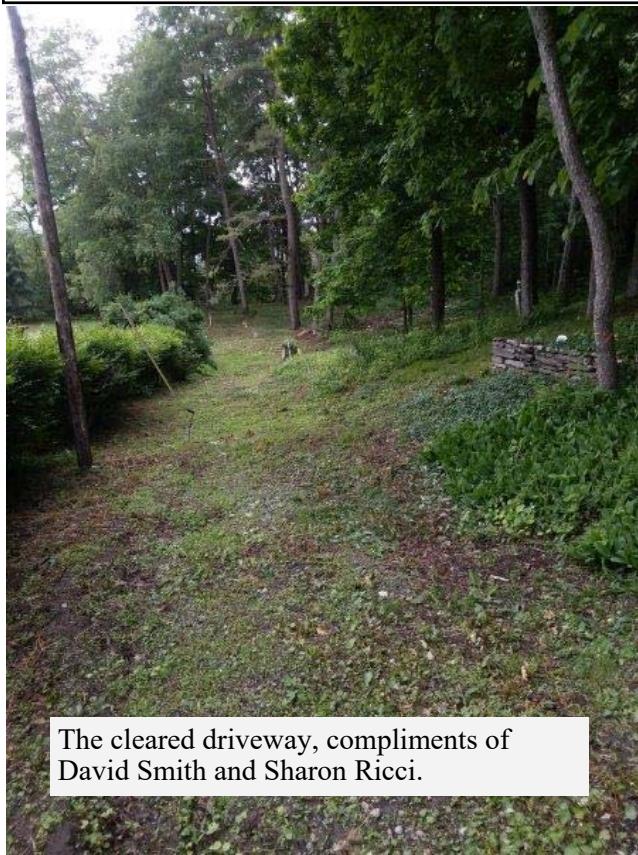


The morning crew (Allan Buddle, Beth Buddle Bevars, Sharon and Mark Ricci)



Mark Smith, near the grave marker of his 4th Great Grandmother

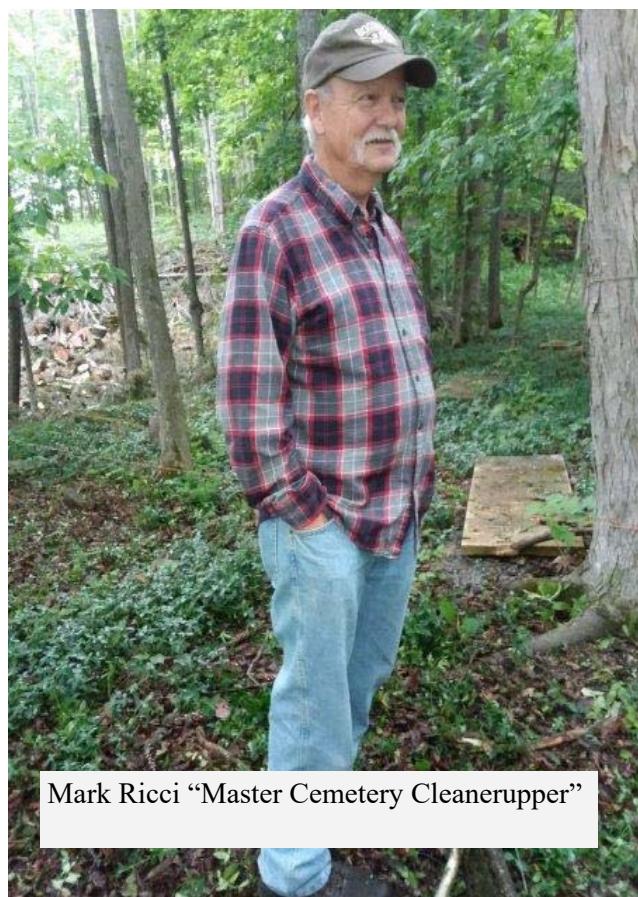
**PHOTOGRAPHS FROM REYNOLDSVILLE CEMETERY PROJECT  
SATURDAY, JUNE 2, 2018**



The cleared driveway, compliments of David Smith and Sharon Ricci.



Sue Magnosi



Mark Ricci "Master Cemetery Cleanerupper"



Rebecca Wright and Mark Ricci, cutting up the fallen tree.

**Backbone Ridge History Group  
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Trumansburg, NY 14886**

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**WWW.BACKBONERIDGEHISTORYGROUP.COM**

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.

For new or renewal memberships, for an individual or household please send \$10 to BRHG, PO Box 62, Trumansburg, NY 14886

