

The Backbone

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

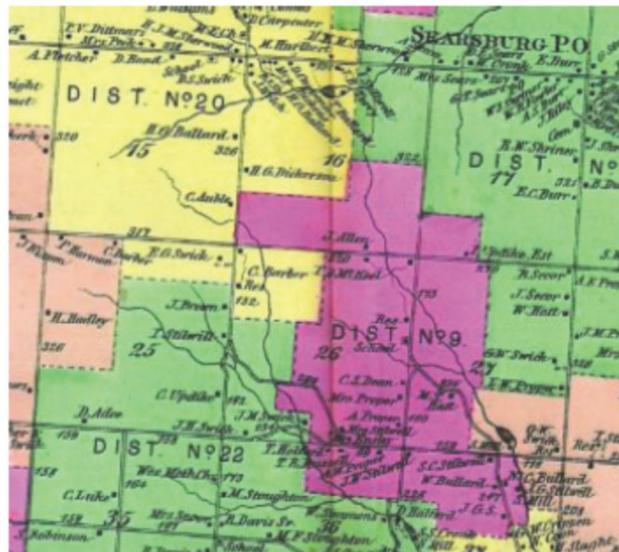
BECAUSE HISTORY MATTERS

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SPECIAL EVENT

Backbone Ridge History Group
Presents
Walk the Military Lot Line



October 5, 2019 1-3:30 PM
(end time approximate)

Parking Area: The corner of Vesa and Bower Roads
The location is on Vesa, one mile south of Searsburg Road and one mile west of the intersection of Grove and Bower Roads.

We will be walking south on the Backbone Trail - Wear comfortable hiking shoes and be prepared to walk an uneven horse trail.

RAIN OR SHINE FREE

- Brief Military Tract History Presentation
- Resurvey a Lot Line using original 1789 Survey Notes and Equipment
- Walk the Line comparing 1789 vs. 2019 Landscape Observations
- Learn about mid 1800s agriculture on the Backbone Ridge
- Take Home Booklet with information about Hector lots 25 and 26

For Further Information email: mrsb056@gmail.com or call Beth Bevars at 912-755-2725
Financial Assistance provided by a generous grant from the Delavan Foundation.

BY HAROLD BUSH

As we head into fall, preparations are made for weather changes. Thoughts of our ancestors making their preparations brings nostalgic memories of great-grandparents making theirs. Stacked firewood, filled coal bins, canned fruits, vegetables, and meats...looking back you realize that was just for starters. Times have changed some, and as we make our own preparations, many families do similar things to then although some challenges are different with modern advances. Keep in mind that our fall activities and preparations are experiences for the next generations.

Hope your Fall has enough helpful days to get everything done.

Looking forward to the upcoming events (music presentations, cemetery work, other outdoor activities, and community support), some information found in this Newsletter.



Thank you. Harold P. Bush, BRHG President

FOR WHOM THE VALOIS BELLS TOLLED

BY CRISS ONAN

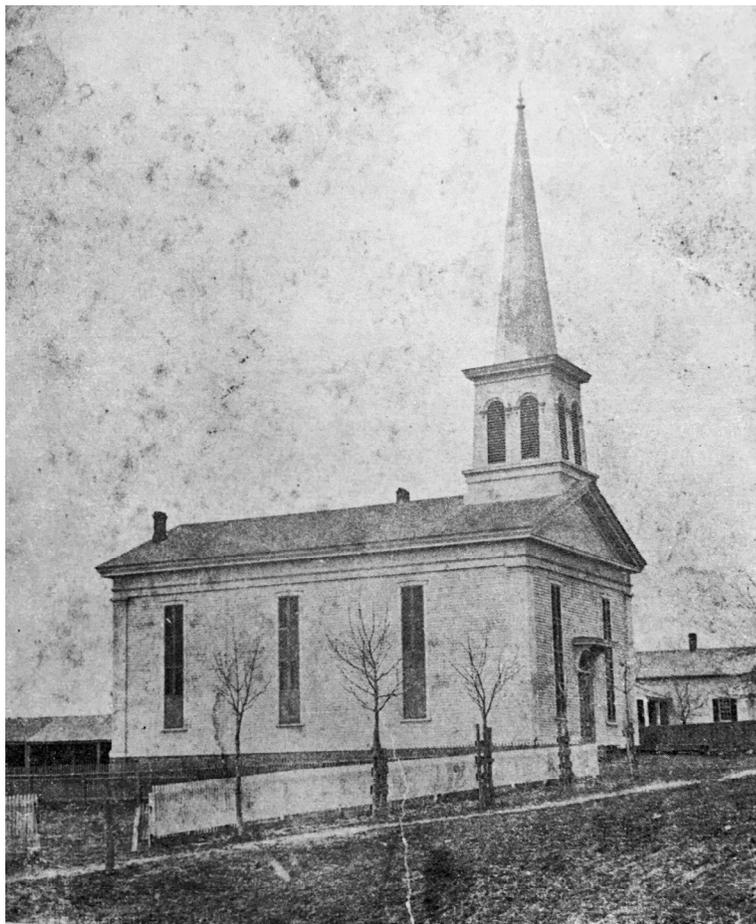
A poster from the Logan Community Center regarding one of the Valois church bells inspired me to do some further research. It's easy to forget today that before electronic communication, bells were the only way of quickly communicating with nearby residents.

The first Valois church bell was installed at the Baptist Church about 1866 according to a published history covering this period compiled by Wayne E. Morrison, Sr. The church had originally been formed as the Lodi Baptist

Church. The building location in North Hector (as Valois was called then) was the third since the church had been formed in 1809.

The new bell was made by the foundry of Jones & Company in Troy, NY. A few years later, it was replaced by one made by the same manufacturer. The bell's inscription reads: "Cast for the Baptist Church, Hector, NY A.D. 1874. The Jones & Company, Troy Bell foundry, Troy, NY 1874."

Photo: original Baptist Church after 1866



THE BAPTIST CHURCH OF LODI, NORTH HECTOR.

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FOR WHOM THE VALOIS BELLS TOLLED

BY CRISS ONAN

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Photo The Methodist Episcopal Church



One account had the bell weighing 1,200 pounds. A later report said it weighed 1,800 pounds. A 1942 newspaper column said that the bell had cost \$1 per pound (about \$22 today).

In an undated brochure from Jones & Company, the Reverend H.S. Card of North Hector wrote: "The bell you sent us is received in good order, it is now in its place, and the people are much pleased with it".

An 1876 tornado blew the roof off the church and blew the belfry and spire into a house across the street. The bell struck the center of the highway (now Route 414). Miraculously, although the fittings were broken into pieces, the bell was undamaged after blowing 80 feet!

The roof was rebuilt and it may have been at that time that an entry vestibule with bell tower was added. When the roof was again replaced in 1895, a shingle was uncovered which recounted the tornado.

Photo: Rebuilt Baptist Church after 1876



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BY CRISS ONAN
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The church building with the same bell is now privately owned.

The Valois (North Hector) Methodist-Episcopal Church was organized in 1857.

Following the sudden death of daughter Carrie of typhoid in 1884, church pastor Michael Coyle donated a bell in her honor. The bell was particularly poignant because the 18 year old had had great musical ability. Her piano and organ performances in the area were frequently reported on in the local papers. One of them said that she started playing organ at the church Sunday School at the age of 12. Her death came only a few weeks before she was to enter Syracuse University. The Reverend Coyle had a Meneely bell specially cast by 1889 in her honor. The Meneely Bell Foundary was also located in Troy, NY.

A published 1891 obituary in the Watkins Express said that Michael Coyle never seemed to recover from the shock caused by his daughter's death. The paper noted that "just seven years to a day intervened between the first day of his sickness and that of his daughter's. In addition to donating the bell, he had donated \$1,000 (about \$28,000 today) for a Carrie Coyle Scholarship at Syracuse University. He donated a second S.U. scholarship in his will.

Following the Methodist church's slow attendance decline in the 1930s, the church was dissolved in 1940. The bell was moved to the Logan Methodist Church in 1942 and placed in the belfry by the son of the resident who had originally placed the bell in Valois. It was a fitting relocation. Michael Coyle had also pastored at the Logan church at one time and even personally repaired the church himself at a cost of \$2,500 (about \$59,000 today).

The bell remains in the structure, now the Logan Community Center, today.

Photo below: Logan Community Center



Photo below: Baptist church bell today



CLEANING GRAVESTONES

BY TINA AND DALE UTTER

We are often asked how to clean gravestones. Many people, not knowing who to turn to, usually find themselves talking to a monument dealer. They may be very knowledgeable on what to do with granite headstones, but their expertise when it comes to historical markers made of sandstone or marble, is very limited. In fact, the information they may give you may permanently damage the stone if it is a cleaning or if it is a repair, it may not last. They usually don't have the specific training to answer these questions and would tackle the issues the same way they would for granite markers, with disastrous results.

So why clean a gravestone you ask? Over the years an accumulation of dirt, lichen, algae, moss, mold, pollution, etc. have dirtied the stones so badly that many can barely be read, if at all. Family members, wanting to be able to read their loved ones stones, want them cleaned. People doing genealogy research want to read them as well. We, who love the art work that can be found, want other people to see and appreciate the stones as we do.

The first thing to consider when cleaning gravestones is safety, both your personal safety and that of the stone. Our cemeteries have suffered from years of neglect. We have seen stones leaning so badly that we fear the next gust of wind will blow them over. Others seem perfectly fine but the slightest bump or nudge could send them toppling. Children should never play in cemeteries or climb on the stones. Every year people are killed from falling stones. So before you start cleaning check the gravestone very thoroughly. The first thing you want to see is if it is leaning excessively. Multi-piece monuments may not have anything holding the pieces together so they may slide right off each other. Is the stone broken or cracked anywhere? If it is a multi-piece monument be sure to check every level of stone. We know of one monument that has four different tiers and three of them are cracked or broken. We cringe every time we walk by it. If all looks well stand to one side and push on the stone just a little for one final assurance it is safe. Sometimes a stone is broken below ground level and there is not much holding it in place.

Once you are satisfied that your safety is not in jeopardy then take a closer look at the condition of the stone. Both marble and sandstone are suffering from delamination issues or just splitting apart. So check the edges and see if this is taking place. If it is then the pressure from cleaning could literally make the front or back fall off or at least parts of it. Sandstone has other problems as well. Sometimes part of the front is separating like a blister or bubble. Check the back part of the lettering. Is there a gap? The stone could be rotting from the inside out. Tap the front. Does it sound hollow? This is not a good sound. If there are any doubts or concerns for yourself or the stone then you should not clean it.

We like to visit a Dollar Store to obtain many of our cleaning supplies. Plastic or natural bristled brushes, plastic putty knives, plastic trowels, or wooden skewers can be found there. A plastic bristled grout brush works great for those tough spots but shouldn't be used to clean the whole stone. A garden pump sprayer comes in real handy but never if you have used it previously for any kind of chemical spraying. When cleaning gravestones you never want to use any metal tools such as wire brushes or scrapers. Also do not use any mechanical means such as attachments to a drill. We do not recommend the use of pressure washers especially on marble or sandstone markers. Using tools like these can permanently scratch and damage the stone. Be very careful when using metal shovels and bars as well. Plastic trowels can be very handy when working close to the stone. Usually 60% to 70% of the stone will come clean with just water. So many years of pollution accumulation may never come completely off. NEVER use any household cleaners like Comet or vinegar or chemicals on the stones as this may cause permanent damage. Bleach will react with marble and

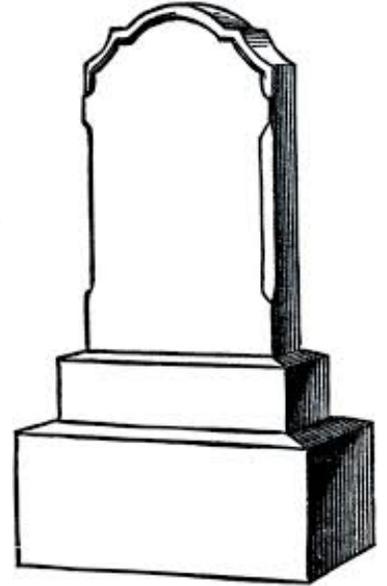
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CLEANING GRAVESTONES

BY TINA AND DALE UTTER

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literally eat the stone away. It may leave a yellowish color and ages the stone as well as making it feel rough to the touch. My technique for cleaning a stone is to first take a brush or plastic putty knife and remove all loose material. Some sources say to clean from the bottom and go up but if the whole stone will be cleaned at that time we always go from the top down. Next I wet down the whole stone using our sprayer so it can be soaking. If you don't have a sprayer then wet down the side you will be cleaning from a gallon jug. I then like to use the putty knife again which will remove a lot more material once it is wet. With that done you are now ready for your scrub brush. I like to keep dipping my scrub brush into a bucket of water, as the extra water helps to wash the dirt down the stone. Scrub gently in a circular motion or up and down and then right and left so you clean all areas of the stone. Use the putty knife or grout brush for hard to remove areas. Popsicle sticks, tongue depressors or wooden shims work well also. We use wooden skewers to remove material from the lettering when brushes aren't getting it. Rinse the stone often so you aren't grinding the dirt back into the stone. Rinse the whole side when you are all done before proceeding to the next side. When you think you are all done check all sides and edges to be sure you haven't missed anywhere. Now it is time for one final rinse. The last thing we do is to spray the stone with D/2 Biological Solution. This is a biocide and will kill any plant or animal growth and will also work on the areas that initially did not come clean. We suggest to use it full strength. You must be patient with this product to see its results. Rain reactivates its action so it will continue to work and the rain washes off the old growth and stains. If there is a lot of growth on the stone it may turn a marble stone orange—don't panic, it will wash off in time.



This is an expensive product so we do not suggest to use it as cleaner as the directions suggest. A little also goes a long way. It can be bought on-line and Atlas Preservation.com is as reasonable a price as we have found. It is a very good product tested by the National Park Service and used by the Veterans Administration to clean over 3.5 million gravestones. Again, it may take a month or more to see the full results. Not all stains will come off easily or at all so another spraying could be done at a later date.

Our cemeteries are in bad shape and in need of attention so we applaud the efforts of those seeking to make some improvements. Taking a stone that you have no idea what it says and cleaning it so it can now be read is very gratifying. You should give it a try. We would like to say a big THANK YOU to all out there who are doing work in our cemeteries. Your efforts are appreciated.

ASK OUR READERS: DO YOU KNOW HOW TEXAS HOLLOW GOT ITS NAME?

Do you know how Texas Hollow got its name? What do you call the streams that run north and south from the middle of the hollow?

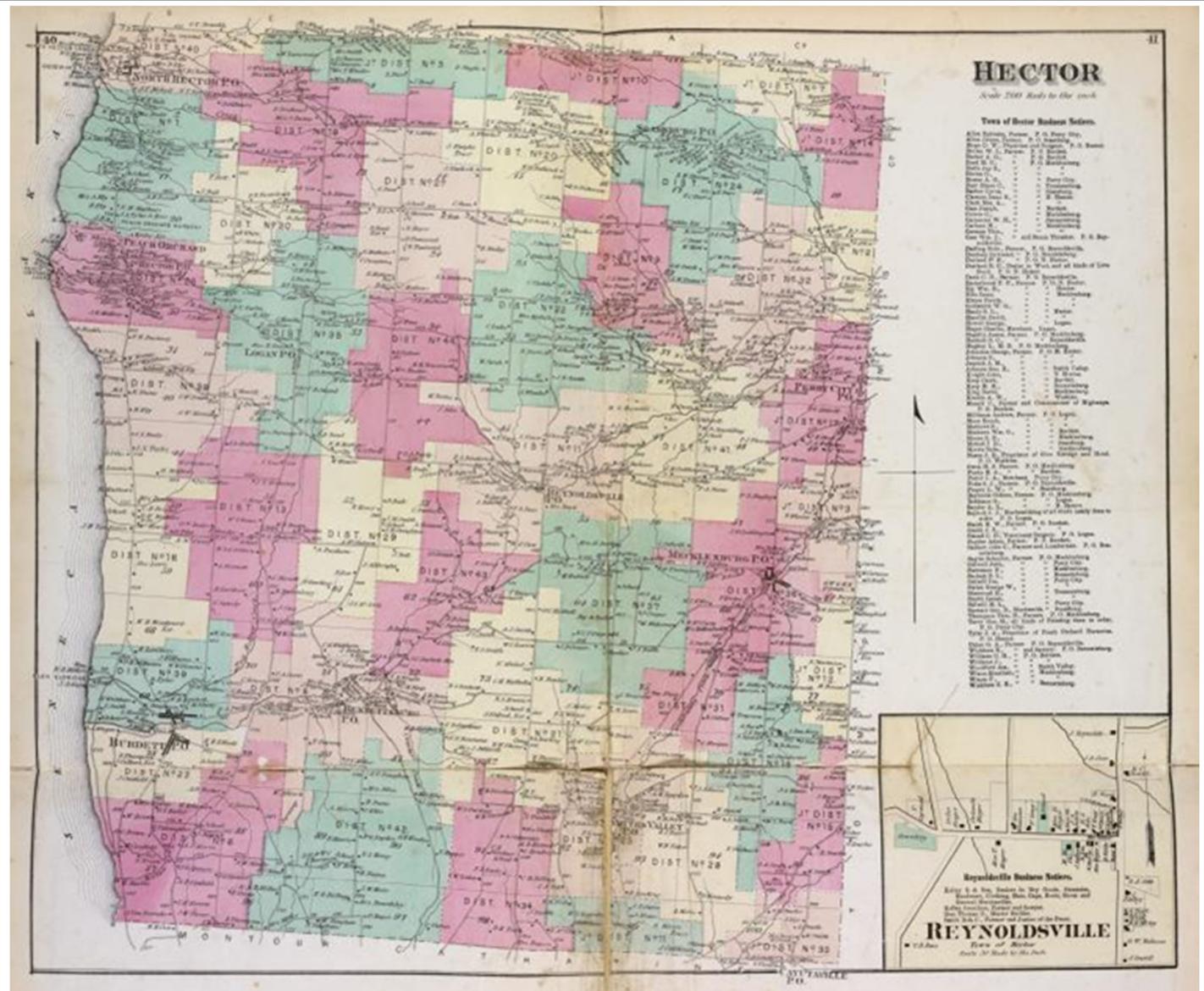
Texas Hollow runs south from Bennettsburg to Odessa. It is a through-valley---glacially carved, containing a stream divide. It is a mile wide and six miles long---wild and peaceful with steepened sides rising 500 feet. Near the middle of the valley, there is an outcrop of rock where two small streams begin their journey. Though they are separate and flowing in opposite directions, both streams have been identified as Cranberry Creek at different times.



In 1874 on a map of the Town of Hector, published from a survey under the direction of Beach Nichols, the north-flowing stream is labeled Cranberry Creek. Its water, captured by Hector Falls Creek, continues west and eventually tumbles into Seneca Lake. Nichols did not name the south-flowing stream until it entered Catherine Mill Creek where it turns west, then north, also uniting with Seneca Lake. In 1897, the name Texas Hollow appeared on a USGS topographical map. This map does not identify the north-running stream and labels the south one Cranberry. To add to the confusion Cranberry south joins the same stream with a new name, Catlin Mill Creek. In a time-span of 23 years, the north Cranberry Creek lost its name on the USGS map, but not in the minds of the local people. Where did the name Texas Hollow come from and which stream do you call Cranberry Creek?

ASK OUR READERS

DO YOU KNOW HOW TEXAS HOLLOW GOT ITS NAME?



Map of the Town of Hector, survey conducted by Beach Nichols and published in 1874.

If anyone has any information on Texas Hollow, please address all communication to any of the following:

Mail:
PO Box 62
Trumansburg, NY 14886

Email:
backboneridgehg@gmail.com

Phone:
Harold Bush at 607-227-8994
Beth Bevars at 912-755-2725

Backbone Ridge History Group
PO Box 62
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.

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

Volunteers and Trustees Needed!

If you are interested in the stories and history of the Backbone Ridge, please consider joining us!

We need volunteers to do small (or large!) projects! And we need Trustees to help us forge a path for the future.

Questions? Please contact us at backboneridgehg@gmail.com or call Harold at 607-227-8994 or Beth at 912-755.2725.