The Backbone

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

BECAUSE HISTORY MATTERS

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Announcing the Backbone Ridge History Research Center

by Allan Buddle

As a result of a very generous donation by Amy Jennings Pemberton, the Backbone Ridge History Group of Schuyler and Seneca Counties now has a home. Formerly the Law Office of the late Charles Jennings and his wife Virginia, the building will serve as a business office and storage location for historic documents where they can be accessed by researchers.

Quoting Amy, "My Dad would be so pleased that the building will serve an historical purpose." Having been instrumental in creation of the Lodi Historical Society and preservation of the Society's Church Building and organ, it is fitting that Charles Jennings' legacy will continue, although in a larger geographical area much of which has been underserved in documenting the history of the people, lands and surrounding small communities.

In March, 2012, the trustees and other stakeholders met with a consultant to discuss strategic planning for the Backbone Ridge History Group. The services of a consultant were provided through a grant from Museumwise, now the Museum Association of New York. We were led through a very interesting process of identifying BRHG strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The group identified our strongest weakness- "Lack of a physical presence (building)". "No central location/ building/Museum." No central facility/ HQ." "Housing." In less than two years of searching, and with Amy's generosity, that weakness is well underway to becoming a strength in many ways.

Since the building has been vacant for several years, and it will be used to store archival records, some restoration and environmental enhancements are needed. This will be staged over a few years as funding for materials become available and volunteers to help with some of the work are identified. Gerry Messmer, Trustee and Secretary of the BRHG, will coordinate the physical improvements. He will be pleased to learn of any assistance, either financial or hands on, that anyone would like to offer. Gerry can be reached at 607 387 9669 or mandg9669@zoom-dsl.com.

In conclusion, the Board of Directors and others associated with the Backbone Ridge History Group express our deepest appreciation to Amy Jennings Pemberton for her generosity and for her support of the BRHG mission.

President's update

Having decided to just ignore winter, I am looking forward to observing how this coming spring and summer might be different. Probably there will be some good outcomes and some not so good such as damaged fruit. What do you think would have been the impact of this past winter on the Hector Backbone? Please drop us a note with your thoughts.

We have a busy year lined up. Three public programs are planned. In April Richard Austic will provide some history of poultry from taming the jungle chicken to the modern poultry industry examining how the small flocks on the Hector Backbone fit in to that history. In July Allan Sweet will present a program on the local manufacture and use of crockery for many purposes. In the fall, the Bethel Cemetery and Methodist Episcopal Meeting House at Liberty Corners will be the scene of presentations by and Mecklenburg Methodist Church Pastor Cheryl Hine and Seneca County Historian Walter Gable. They will discuss the history of the era when Circuit Rider Preaching was at its peak. Early planning includes a short Revival Meeting Reenactment, blessing of the burials, tour of the cemetery and dedication of a permanent historic marker for the cemetery and meeting house.

In May we will return to the Reynoldsville Cemetery with a larger small army to continue cleanup and restoration begun there last fall. A third round of work will most likely take place there in the fall of 2014. Please see more information elsewhere in this issue of the *Backbone*.

A newsletter will be produced for each season with articles of interest contributed by your *neighbors. Perhaps you would consider preparing an article. Most everyone can relate in some* way to the history of the Hector Backbone. It would be great if you would share. If writing is a chore, just give any of the trustees a call, or send a letter or e-mail and we will come with pad and pencil to capture your story.

Capturing stories is ongoing. Many have been interviewed and also shared photos. Several more individuals have expressed an interest in being interviewed and we are working our way around. How many of us wish we had asked more questions of our family when we could?

Addison Baldridge Story

by Marsha Smith

This is an article written by **Addison BALDRIDGE** in 1932 for the Contributor's Column in the Interlaken Review. Addison was the son of Alexander BALDRIDGE and Susan Ann WILKINSON. He was born 6 Sep 1854 in Kendaia, Seneca County, NY. He had two wives, the first being Mary Jane SACKETT, born cir 1856, died 14 May 1891. On 3 Dec 1893, he married Carrie Gertrude RAPPLEYE. Addison died 28 May 1940. In this story, among other things, he tells about taking a trip over to Bennettsburg to check out a store for sale with his friend, Christopher Columbus Minor.

THE INTERLAKEN REVIEW Contributors' Column 15 January 1932 Editor Interlaken Review.

Have greatly enjoyed reading the letter in Contributors' Column by Messrs. Farr, Smith, Bassett, and Travers, and Mrs. Bennett. Some of them mentioned people, places, and events that recall to me memories of long ago. I well remember when I first met Mr. Farr. 51 or 52 years ago this winter Christopher Columbus Minor, who he mentioned in one of his letters, lived at Kendaia. He and his wife kept a store there, and having heard of a store for sale at Bennettsburg, he proposed hitching one of my horses with his to a pleasure sleigh, (or two-seated cutter), and driving up there. So he and his wife and my wife and I started, going through Ovid and Lodi. At Lodi Center, we stopped to warm at Mr. Farr's. He and his mother were keeping store there, and that was the first time I ever met Mr. Farr. Mr. Minor pointed out the farm he used to own, and many other places of interest, one of which was the birthplace of the late Dr. D.F. Everts, of Romulus.

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Addison Baldridge Story

(Continued from page 2)

We also stopped at Dr. C.D. Mead's at Logan, and saw him and his fancy, imported sheep. At Bennetsburg, we left Mr. and Mrs. Minor and spent the night with Miss Connie Morris, an old friend of ours. We returned the next day, again stopping at Mr. Farr's. (Had a fine trip, but Mr. Minor did not buy the store.)

Mr. Farr also spoke of Dr. James Kennedy, who I well remember, as he taught our school at Kendaia 68 years ago this winter and boarded at my father's. While there, small pox broke out in the district and Mr. Kennedy procured some virus and vaccinated me, and later vaccinated a greater part of the school from my arm. Mr. Kennedy loved fun and I remember one day he had Tommy on the floor trying to teach him his letters. (What a change in the method of teaching little children.) Tommy was about 6 years old and his parents came from Ireland. They had reached the letter T in the alphabet, but Tommy could not name it; so to help him along, Mr. Kennedy asked him: "What do your folks have to drink for supper?" Quick as a flash the reply came, "Mush." That brought laughter from the whole school, Mr. Kennedy included.

Mr. Farr also mentioned Mr. Andrew B. VanVleet, who is now in his 93rd year. 50 years ago this next July, I sold Mr. VanVleet a grain binder, which was the first binder with an "Appleby Knotter" (the first successful knotter), owned in the town of Lodi.

Mr. Farr spoke of Dr. C.V.H. Morris. I well remember my wife and I attending a reception at his home in honor of his son, David and wife, the latter was Miss Emma Bates, of Havanna, (near Montour Falls), both of whom were friends and schoolmates at Cook Academy, Havanna. (sic).

Mr. Farr, in one of his letters, spoke of Dr. C.V.H. Morris being a specialist in treatment of tapeworm. From an incident which happened 52 or 53 years ago, I was led to believe that Dr. Morris' brother was the specialist. One day, when in Waterloo, a man asked me where I was from and upon telling him Kendaia, he asked for a ride, stating that he was a brother of Dr. C.V.H. Morris and would like a lift on his way. I said certainly, and on our way in a lumber wagon (which was a slow way to travel), he opened his valise and showed me quite a collection of tapeworms of different sizes and lengths; described the method of treatment, etc. all of which led me to think him the specialist in such cases.

Mr. Farr spoke of meeting Mr. I.W. Pack in Kansas. Mr. Pack was a nephew of my stepmother, (Elizabeth Pack Baldridge), and he worked for my father on the farm at Kendaia 64 or 65 years ago this coming summer, and he and I roomed together. Mr. Pack's sister married Ellsworth Patrick, whom I suppose was a relative of Harry Patrick, of Covert. They moved to Ovid, Michigan, about 60 years ago. I remember, too, the camp meetings at North Hector, spoken of by Messrs, Smith and Bassett. It was the most perfect place, in those days, for such gatherings. 56 or 57 years ago this last summer, I attended meeting there and heard an ex-pugilist, Johnny Walker, preach, and, if I remember correctly, the grounds were south of the steamboat landing, and not north, as Mr. Bassett thought.

Think I have reminiscenced (sic) enough for this time. Will try and write again, giving some older history and something about the hard times about 1837, as I got it from my father and others, and from some records in my possession.

Respectfully, Addison Baldridge

Archaeology Open House Saturday May 31 10-4

The Finger Lakes National Forest (FLNF), in conjunction with Dr. LouAnn Wurst, Western Michigan University, invite community members to visit and/or help excavate Feature 9 at the Ball Site, located on Burnt Hill Road.

LouAnn has been excavating at farms in the forest since 2000 to learn about the people that once lived on the Hector Backbone. This feature was identified last summer and consists of loose rock filling what appears to be a pit feature. This possible pit is located underneath intact soils dating from about 1850-1870.

Please contact Jodie L. Vanselow at the FLNF 607 546-4470 or LouAnn Wurst 607 821-8297 for additional information. This free event is rain or shine and cannot be rescheduled.

Mystery Photo's

Can anyone identify this barn?

The artwork was done by Anne Knight.

Last Edition's Mystery Photo

The smiling, well dressed young men in the Mystery Photo in the Winter, 2013 issue of the *Backbone (and also above right)* are (l. to r.), Edgar, Charley and Clarence Moore. The farm where the photo was taken was owned by Edgar and his wife Susie Swick Moore. It was located about halfway between Potomac Road on the west and Voorheis Road on the east and about a half mile east from the intersection of Picnic Area Road and Potomac Road. Prior to 1935, access to the farm was along an extension of Picnic Area Road however the bridge was washed out during the 1935 flood and not replaced. The farm was sold to the Government in July, 1937. An agreement authorized temporary continuing use of the buildings and land until such time as the government determined that they needed it for reforestation. In an interview with June Spencer Cullen, we learned of her visits to her grandparents' farm.

BC: Bob Crippen JC: June Crippen

BC: The electrification, I think, was around that time frame. (Early 1930's) Can you remember, did your grandparents have electricity? **JC:** They didn't have electric, as I remember over at Reynoldsville. **BC**: Right. And heating, can you remember that? **JC:** No, not really. **BC:** I think a lot of them were just pot-bellied stoves. **JC**: I think you're right. **BC**: They just do a room. **JC:** Well, we didn't spend a lot of time over there in the winters. My grandfather would come over to Uncle Will's farm (In Logan) and pick us up in the sleigh. Because none of the roads were open then in the winter, to get to their place. **BC:** Wow. You had mentioned that earlier, an you tell a little about that? You drove the car up...**JC:** We went up to uncle Will's and parked the car and then granddad came over in a horse and sleigh, just came over the hills. I don't know if he followed the roads or not, I don't remember that because I wasn't very old, and took us back to their house.

Please let us know if you would like additional information and we will put you in touch with the family. You can contact Allan Buddle at 607-532-4213 or orchardland@zoom-dsl.com.

Cemetery Restoration Work in Reynoldsville to Resume on May 2nd and 3rd.

After a very successful two days at the Reynoldsville Cemetery last fall, Dave Beckhorn has scheduled a follow-up there this spring to continue with cleanup, restoration and documentation of the burials in this historic cemetery. If you can spare some time please bring some hand tools for raking and shoveling. Most of the stones are down and the plan is, wherever possible, to continue raising them, laying down a bed of crushed stone, relaying the stones on the bed and cleaning them with soft brushes and water to enable reading and documenting the information carved on them. Parking is up in back of the highway garage. We will start work at 9 am; plan on bringing a lunch and a raincoat if necessary. Hope to see you there!

MAIL CALL
Comments and letters and pictures From our readers

Editor's Note: "Mail Call" will become a new regular article in all future issues Let us hear from you! We welcome letters and pictures from our readers Please include name, address, and phone number with your submission You can email us at orchardland@zoom-dsl.com or write us at Backbone Ridge History Group, PO Box 64, Trumansburg, NY 14886 We reserve the right to edit letters for length and clarity.

The Search for the Graves of Edward and Susan Stilwell

by David Smith

After our last newsletter we received a request for help from Debbie Stilwell Storbeck, in identifying the locations of the graves of two of her ancestors, Edward and Susan Stilwell. The graves do not appear in "Between the Lakes Cemeteries" and have not been found elsewhere. His father James Stilwell, a Revolutionary War veteran, is buried in Jones Cemetery on Bower Road, Town of Hector.

An Excerpt from Mrs. Stilwell Storbeck's letter-

"Edward Lounsberry Stilwell and Susan Garrison are my 3rd great grandparents. Their son Sherman settled in Newaygo County, Michigan between 23 Oct 1850 and 22 March 1857 and is my 2nd great grandfather. Information on the Stilwell family is plentiful but I have one brick wall I've not been able to break through. (Editor's note- The locations of the graves of Edward and Susan.)

Many Ancestry.com family trees show that Edward died in 1846 in Ulster County, NY. The 1850 US census for Columbia, Bradford, Pennsylvania shows E. Stowell (Stilwell) 63, a carpenter, Susan Stowell 49, Sherman Stowell 21, Edward Stowell 19, Nelson Stowell 17, Nicholas Stowell 13, David 13, Mary 11, Estira 9, Peter 6 and Henry P Stowell 4.

In the 1855 Census for the Town of Hector: Susan Stilwell 54 head, b. Duchess Co., Nicholas C. Stilwell, David P. Stilwell 18, Estira C. Stilwell 13, Peter V. Stilwell 10, Henry P Stilwell 8.

I can deduce then, that Edward L. Stilwell died between 1850 and 1855, but where? And where is he buried?

Susan Garrison Stilwell died in 1880. 1880 US Census Mortality Schedule Hector line 17: Susan Stilwell female, white, widowed POB (place of Birth) New York about 1803 age 77 died Mar 1880 Consumption, Hector, Schuyler, NY. Where was she buried?"

Edward Stilwell (1786 - ? was born 12 February 1786 near Marble town, Ulster County, New York. In the spring of 1800, when he was but a boy of 14 years, his family moved westward as pioneers with horses and oxen, over the Catskill Mountain and beyond to the frontier of Hector, New York. The family resided on lot 28 between Searsburg and Perry City. Stilwell road bisects it. Bower road is North side of it, Sirrine South. At that time, the family included Edward 14, his father father James 45, mother Catharine 30, an older brother James 16, younger brothers Stephen 12, Richard 9, John 7, Jacob 4, and baby sister Mary, nearly 2. In time, the family would continue to grow, with the addition of six younger brothers and sisters. Edward grew to manhood in this area and at the age 19, married his first wife. Her name is believed to be Sally Ferris, Edward and his first wife had eleven children. Their first child, Clark Stilwell was born in the year of 1807, in the town of Hector, New York. After the loss of his first wife, Edward married Susan Garrison and had eleven children by her. Edward moved his entire family to Tioga County, Pennsylvania about 1847. It is certain that at least one of his children (Clark) moved there. At some point after 1850 the family returned to Hector, New York.

If you can help or know someone who can, please contact Debbie Stilwell Storbeck directly at 7432 Red Rock Trail, Kalamazoo, Michigan, 49009-7086 or 269-267-4973. Or if you prefer please contact David Smith at 86 Sheffield Road, Ithaca, New York 14850 or 607-273-0834 or precancelsmith@aol.com

1 For references, contact David Smith at precancelsmith@aol.com.

Sugarin' Time

By Gerry Messmer

It's the second week of March again – nostalgia sets in every year at this time - the days are warmer while the nights remain cold, just the right combination to start the sap flowing in the newly budded sugar maples. The streamlets are flowing once again and in the sugar bush little pools of crystal clear snow melt water are showing. It's "sugarin' time" once more! The very first time this combination of nature's wondrous events struck home to me was way back in 1944. I was nine years old and we were visiting my Aunt Geraldine Batty's magical home on the Podunk Road in Trumansburg. I say magical because of her loving way of hostessing all who came to her home. Her cooking and baking were more savoring than any "haute cuisine" I've ever encountered. She had that special talent for making all her guests more comfortable than you can imagine. I especially remember sleeping in her huge canon ball bed in her upstairs bedroom where I cuddled in one of her downy soft feather ticks – the closest today's kids can come to one of these is what we call comforters, a far cry from a feather tick. Falling off to sleep I fondly remember that the only night sound came from the gentle breeze soughing through the giant pine trees in the side yard and gently wafting through the partially open bedroom window. I remember awaking to the aroma of home cured bacon and pancakes from the griddle in the kitchen. Breakfast was a feast set for a king – stacks of homemade griddle cakes and bacon done to just the right crispness. BUT – the pancake syrup was something I had never experienced before. I asked Aunt Geraldine where this delicious nectar had come from. She told me her father in law, Uncle Don's father, had a "sugar bush" way up in the woods and he made their own maple syrup from sap gathered from his stand of sugar maple trees. She followed that up with "I think "Dompey" (that's what my cousins called their Grandfather) is going to the "sugar shack" today, would you like to go with him?" No nine year old could ever turn down an invitation like that. I could hardly overcome my anxiety to be a part of this wondrous expedition.

Just before mid-morning Dompey appeared in the barnyard with his big team of Blacks, Deck & Kit, and was just hooking the team to the tandem sleighs. On the sleighs was mounted a large shiny bright stock watering tank complete with a special wood cover to keep its contents from spilling as the "gatherin' in" proceeded. As soon as I reached the barnyard I asked this kindly child loving grandfather why he was not using his Model 10-20 tractor. He explained to me that with the war going on gasoline was in very short supply and our fighting men needed it so badly at the Front. Joining me with Dompey were my cousins Kay Mary and Jim and my younger brother Dave. Dompey sent Jim to the henhouse to gather up a basket of eggs. I thought to myself that was a funny thing to do – why do we need eggs when we were headed for the woods. With each of us kids standing on the out rigged struts alongside the tank and holding on tight we were off to the sugarbush with Dompey driving his team taking us on a new adventure "way up in the woods…."

After we had crossed the little stream by the pasture we were straightaway headed for the woods and our introduction to "sugarin' time." Upon our arrival Dompey explained how the procedure was to go. He showed us the sugar shack where smoke was coming from the stack. Once inside we saw the large evaporating pans with the maple sap, gathered earlier, bubbling away and smelling so delicious, the aroma filling the whole area. Below the pans there was a nicely burning fire keeping the sap at just the right temperature. Once our tour of the sugar shack was over we all ventured into the "work area" where we could help with the gatherin'. The trees in the maple stand all had at least one "spile" inserted into predrilled holes, the larger trees usually had two spiles. These small faucet-less style metal tubes also had hooks on them from which the gatherin' pails were hanging to collect sap. Our job was to unhook the pails of sap and pour their contents into the big sleigh mounted tank and then replace the empty pails back onto the spiles. After nearly 2 and one half hours we returned to the sugar shack where Dompey transferred the new sap to a storage tank where he had a drip process feeding the evaporation pans. As soon as that was done we all gathered in the shack to warm ourselves a bit and relax. It was just after noon when Dompey opened up his pack and brought out two loaves of unsliced freshly baked homemade bread. The next part

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Sugarin' Time

By Gerry Messmer

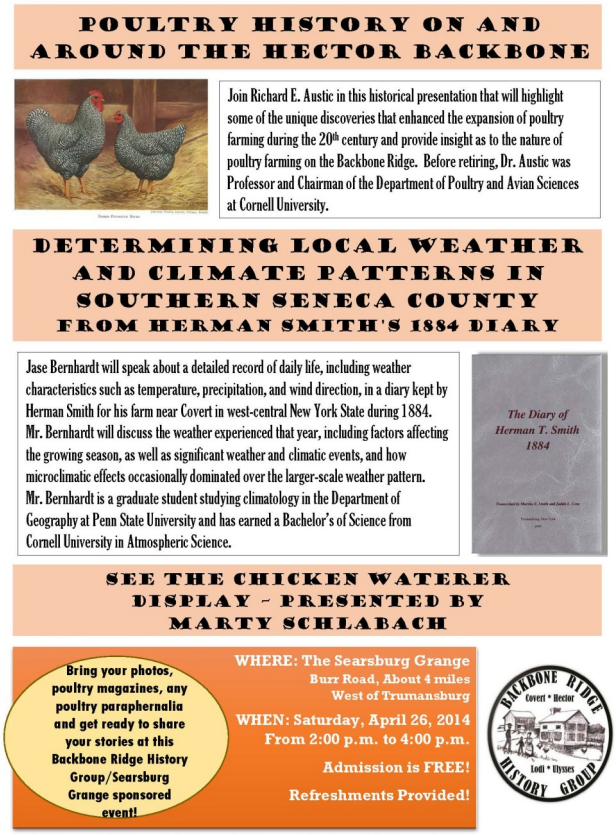
(continued from page 6)

of our lunch break astonished us all as he began slicing the bread and toasting the slices by the fire and then he followed that up with cracking the eggs and gingerly placing them into one of the evaporation pans with the slowly bubbling sap. He showed us that he was poaching the eggs for us to put on the slices of toasted bread. To our amazement he carefully removed the poached eggs and placed them on "our slices" of toast. Our eyes lighted up in delight as we tasted this special lunch treat: the unforgettable and delectable taste of maple flavored poached eggs on toast prepared for us "way up in the woods." Many years have passed since that unforgettable adventure…but several years ago, in more modern times, I had the memorable opportunity to relive that special time once again at sugarin' time. Our nephew, Karl Dendis, son of my wife's brother Joe, operated a sugarbush on the Dendis Farm where my wife Millie grew up. He and our four children were as astonished as I was "way back when." I took them to Karl's "sugar shack" with its bubbling maple sap and re-enacted that wondrous adventure of 1944 by serving them maple flavored poached eggs on toast to their utter delight. It was sugarin' time once again just as it is each March around the Backbone Ridge of this wondrous place we call home.

Poultry History

By Dick Austic

Chickens were kept on farms of the 19th century, but they were seldom major contributors to farm income. They were an adjunct – often under the care of the housewife who could generate food for the family and 'pin money' from local sales of eggs. In the late 1800s, influential people began to recognize the potential of poultry as a profitable farm enterprise in its own right. The Department of Poultry Husbandry was established at Cornell University in 1907 under the leadership of Professor James E. Rice, an avid promoter of poultry farming and poultry as a subject worthy of scientific investigation. Over the years great strides were made in the development of the fledgling poultry industry. More productive strains of chickens were developed, nutritional requirements of chickens were identified, the physiological basis of avian reproduction was elucidated, and more efficient technologies of egg and poultry processing and marketing evolved. Poultry schools were popular. These and other educational activities informed farmers of the newest developments in poultry production. The number of poultry on farms, and the number of farms specializing in poultry increased dramatically in the first half of the 20th century. However, the number of poultry farms declined in later decades. Most old poultry houses are deteriorating or have already disappeared. It is interesting in this regard, that light is crucial for maximum rates of egg production. Natural light was favored, but supplemented with artificial light as needed. Poultry sheds had many south-facing windows to allow for ventilation and access to sun light. Similarly, single and multi-story buildings had large numbers of windows, many more than would be seen on barns that were used for most other purposes. Remnants of poultry houses such as these still can be seen on properties located on the Backbone Ridge and elsewhere in rural areas of New York State. This historical presentation will highlight some of the unique discoveries that enhanced the expansion of poultry farming during the 20th century and provide insight as to the nature of poultry farming on the Backbone Ridge.



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