



# The Backbone

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

BECAUSE HISTORY MATTERS

## BACKBONE RIDGE HISTORY GROUP'S WEBSITE BY DANIEL HUSTON

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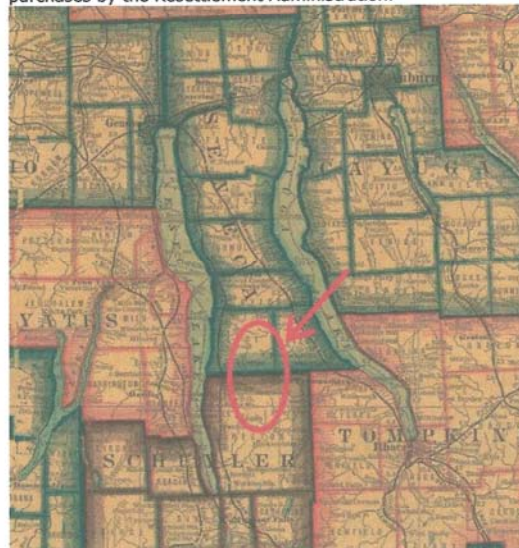
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### Welcome

The Backbone Ridge is the name given to the hilltop ridge that runs between Seneca and Cayuga Lakes and today is the center of the Finger Lakes National Forest. Its history represents a microcosm of the larger economic, social, and political transformations that have taken place in American society. Realizing that the history of this area prior to the Great Depression might be forgotten, and even lost, with the death of so many of the residents of that time period, those concerned began discussions in 2006 leading to the establishment of the Backbone Ridge History Group (BRHG) in 2010. The BRHG is a grass roots organization to collect the history of the land and the people in this Backbone Ridge area. The group is very interested in this area because the Backbone Ridge was once heavily populated with people, farms and towns and was dramatically changed by the purchases by the Resettlement Administration.



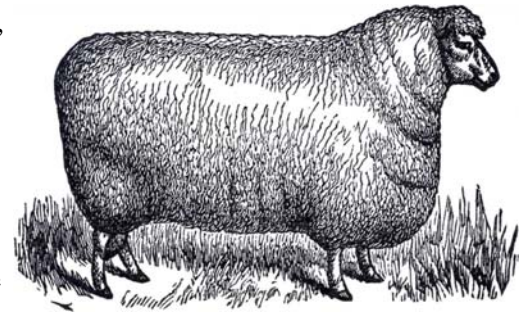
A glance at the BRHG Website

BY ALLAN BUDDLE

Are you enjoying this winter? Being an eternal optimist I am always expecting good things to happen. So far, from my perspective, in this area anyway, this winter has sure proven that a good thing has happened. Ice fishermen and snowmobilers may not agree.

Following along that path of expecting good things to happen, a few months ago we received a message via the BRHG website- "Are you still alive?" It was from Daniel Huston and he said he would like to help us with our website. He sure has! Now it is not uncommon to bring up the website at any time and find something new whether it is pictures, cemetery information, interviews or we shall see what's next.

The cover of this issue contains an image of the BRHG Home Page and inside you can read Dan's vision for the website. My only concern is that some of you may not have a computer. If not, you are encouraged to go to your local library and bring up the website by Googling "Backbone Ridge History Group" or entering [www.backboneridgehistorygroup.com](http://www.backboneridgehistorygroup.com) in your browser.



We are looking forward to some interesting programming and exhibits during the coming year and continuing with cemetery cleanup, restoration and celebration. Check the website for details. They will be posted there as they become available.

At the spring program in late April or early May we will hear about some of the old country doctors who traveled the Backbone Ridge in buggies and sleighs to care for the ill and deliver the babies. There will be presentations and opportunities for everyone to share their stories.

Floats and exhibits during the summer and fall will focus on sheep, wool and the creation of textiles for use in everyday life.

The fall program will feature music and its importance in the social fabric of the Backbone Ridge Communities.

Through your letters, e-mail messages and participation in events, we continue to thoroughly appreciate your sharing of our common heritage in whatever form it takes! It is so easy to be optimistic as I sit here with pen in hand watching the snow start to fall. Hmmm!

## **BACKBONE RIDGE HISTORY GROUP'S WEBSITE**

BY DANIEL HUSTON

Centuries ago, our ancestors used verbal means to communicate. History was verbally shared and repeated from generation to generation. There were some cave drawings that suggested that the written word was used some 30,000 to 50,000 years ago. However, arguably it is believed that the written word became more prominently used somewhere about 5,000 years ago. One of the greatest inventions was the Printing Press that took the chore of transcription to a mechanical reproduction event. Gutenberg is most prominently known for his printing press use with moveable type face around 1439. Books were mass produced and became available to many to preserve their history, their heritage, and to provide education from perhaps thousands of miles away.

Photography was painful and expensive to use in the time before the 1880's. In 1888, George Eastman (of Rochester, NY!) developed the first roll film camera that was inexpensive and easy to use. This allowed the use of photography to be used by the everyday person. Since that time, photography has evolved to high quality images on film as well as digital.

(cont'd on pg. 3)



Dan Huston, Webmaster

**BY DAN HUSTON**  
(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

The head stones used by our ancestors hundreds of years ago are fading, peeling, and crumbling. Today we use photographs, books, and "the cloud" to store our memories. Our mission is to use this website to provide a common ground for all persons interested in our heritage and history to have an easy and accessible place to share, see, and perhaps reminisce about our parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents. But perhaps even more important is the ability to share our background with our family, our neighbors, and our friends.

**Welcome to the Backbone History Group's web site at <http://www.backboneridgehistorygroup.com>.**

As we enter the second half of the second decade of the 21st century, it becomes more important than ever before to preserve our heritage. The Backbone Ridge History Group is aligned to serve as a catalyst to support this preservation. Using documents from our families, history from personal interviews, maps, and cemetery head stones, we are able to begin this protection of our heritage.

Located on the web site are several of the projects we are currently working with. Personal interviews of people either living or having family living on the Backbone. Each year, the group tackles at minimum one cemetery to restore. Located in the pictures section are photographs of many of the headstones that we have cleaned, straightened, or elevated up to the surface. In addition to these pictures, we have links to many of the cemeteries that are located in the Backbone area. Inside these links you may find more photographs and cemetery maps of head stones. There are also the links to similar web sites that supplements our information.

**<http://www.backboneridgehistorygroup.com>**

### **FARMER VILLAGE POULTRY EXHIBITION\***

Editors Note: \*First appeared in the Ithaca Daily Journal, February 6, 1875.

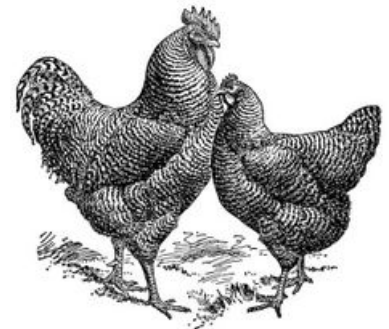
The second annual show of the Farmerville Poultry Society commenced on Wednesday in the Town Hall at Farmer Village, and will close this evening.

There are 154 entries, comprising 144 coops. The hall is well arranged and well ventilated. The principal exhibitors are S. P. Stone, Dr. J. O. Hill, Amasa Woodruff, of Farmer Village; Charles G. Day, George W. Day, George W. Wood, Baker and Fowles of Ithaca; W. I. Bowlby of North Hector; Dr. Lott of Bellona; Selover and Greenfield and Charles G. Fox & Co. of Moravia; and F. F. Preston of Candor.

The display of Brahmas, both light and dark is very fine. Selover & Greenfield of Moravia who make a specialty of these fowls, have some magnificent specimens. The Plymouth Rock variety is well represented by S. P. Stone and B. B. Hill of Trumansburg. Baker and Fowles of Ithaca have a pair of White Polish, which attracted a good deal of attention. They also had several coops of choice fowls of other varieties. Golden Sea Bright Bantams were shown by F. F. Preston and L. Pelton. Baker & Fowles had a pair of neat, dark Bantams.

Dr. J. O. Hill made a large display of aquatic fowls. He has a fine variety of geese and as many ducks.

The exhibition of game fowls embraced White Pile, Black Breasted Red, earl of Derby and others. Houdans were not plenty. Of turkeys, but four coops were entered had they made up in size what they lacked in numbers. C. G. Day, Esq. if Ithaca had several coops of fancy pigeons. Mr. Day can compete on pigeons with anyone in the State. (continued on page 5)



# SPRUCING UP THE RESEARCH CENTER

BY ALLAN BUDDLE

Late fall and early winter have seen lots of activity getting the Research Center ready for archives. Substantial cleaning has been done, and drainage improvements have removed some of the threat to the foundation walls. In cooperation with the Lodi Library next door, a large tree was removed. The tree was dropping ever larger branches on the roofs of both buildings. The furnace was serviced, new tank filler pipes installed with an over-fill warning device, a new thermostat installed and two hot air ducts replaced. These have allowed the building to be heated all winter to a temperature of about 50 degrees which has been adequate for interior work. The top of the chimney has been sealed and new caps placed on both flues.



Thanks to the STEPS Program (Seneca Towns Engaging People for Solutions), on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, a half dozen volunteers showed up to paint. They also brought the paint. See related article below. Painting has continued and by spring, the building will be ready to receive archives where they will be stored in an acid free, stable temperature and humidity environment and listed in a finders-file that will eventually be located on the BRHG Website.

STEPS Project Director Theresa Lahr describes the Community Service Day that was a huge benefit to the Backbone Ridge History Group:

*“One of the goals of the STEPS Neighborhood Health Improvement Initiative is community organizing to motivate action, bringing residents together to work collectively to improve neighborhoods. On Martin Luther King Jr. Day, local residents, coordinated by STEPS, worked together on various tasks at five sites throughout the community. One site was the*

*Backbone Ridge History Group (BRHG) research building in Lodi. A former law office, this building stood vacant in the village of Lodi which has the highest vacancy rate in Seneca County. STEPS is extremely excited that BRHG is investing in the preservation of cultural and historic assets in the STEPS neighborhood. STEPS partnered with BRHG to help paint the interior of the building. (cont'd on pg. 5)*



## SPRUCING UP THE RESEARCH CENTER

BY ALLAN BUDDLE  
(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)

*Caring and taking pride in your community: its' past, present, and future, is the hallmark of a healthy neighborhood and aligns with the mission of both grass roots organizations. We want to preserve and promote the rich history in the STEPS neighborhood. Helping to paint the BRHG building will do much to further this effort, particularly in terms of enhancing public spaces where the BRHG will provide a pre-Great Depression collection display, storage and visibility in the community. What a great use for this building which once stood empty! This is a perfect example of the STEPS mission and desire to revitalize the neighborhood.*

*Upon completion of the day's work, we celebrated our sense of pride at the Ovid Fire Department with delicious soups prepared by Covert resident, Meg Jastran, donations from Marks Pizza, fruits and vegetables, all increasing our social and community connectedness. A big **thank you** to the seven volunteer painters who were from all four towns in the STEPS neighborhood including Dave and Judy Dresser, Ovid, Mary & Natalie Joslyn, Romulus and John Arena, Romulus. (See photos in story) If you live, work, learn and/or play in the towns of Covert, Ovid, Lodi or Romulus you are already a part of STEPS! To learn more and get involved in various projects ranging from improvement of public spaces and health promoting activities and events contact the STEPS office (607) 403-0069 or email [stepscommunity@gmail.com](mailto:stepscommunity@gmail.com) You can find STEPS on Facebook: [www.facebook.com-NYStepsProject](http://www.facebook.com-NYStepsProject) and on the web: [www.senecasteps.org](http://www.senecasteps.org)."*

## FARMER VILLAGE POULTRY EXHIBITION

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

There were two cages of rabbits and to add to the solemnity of the scene, B. B. Dumont sent in a huge owl.

W. I. Bowley of North Hector is a large raiser of Brahmas and other fowls, and his coops were much admired. D. L. Kase of Lodi had a setter dog, also Dr. Stetson of Farmer. D. L. Kase of Lodi has a son who will keep a nice dog, while the father pays equal attention to the horse. Amasa Woodruff fitted up the hall in good shape for the exhibition and is entitled to credit for his taste. The Committee in charge of the exhibition is Reynear Covert, S. P. Stone, A. Woodruff and J. R. Wheeler and they well performed their duty. Our reporter is under great obligations to J. R. Wheeler, Secretary; W. I. Bowlby, S. P. Stone and others for courtesies extended.

We noticed our townsman, C. G. Day Esq., was actively engaged in promoting the popularity of this excellent monthly the "Poultry Organ."

There is no accounting for taste, but we see no harm in taking pride and enjoyment in the care of fancy poultry. It is an innocent amusement, and costs less than to indulge in fancy horses or fancy cows.

Farmer Village is to be congratulated on her enterprise in sustaining so worthy a poultry society, and she has among her citizens breeders whose fowls are equal to any of the distant breeders.

## MYSTERY PHOTO



### Last Month's Mystery Picture Identification:

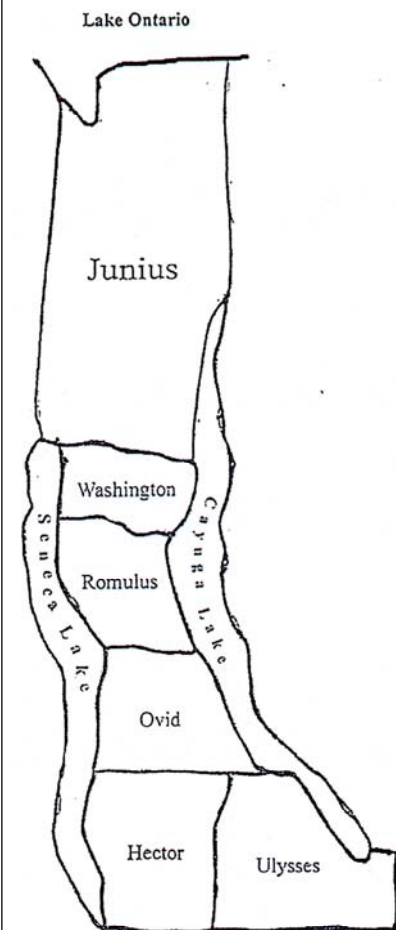
What's missing? Well, many of you realized that the Grazing House is indeed missing from the Hector Grazing grounds along Searsburg Road. The Green Mountain and Finger Lakes National Forest deemed it not of an historical nature and had it razed in order to control their deferred maintenance costs. History repeating itself when depression homes were also razed.

## MYSTERY PHOTO

### This Edition's Mystery Photo:

Can anyone identify the county and year of this map?

Do you have a mystery photo to share? We could certainly use some interesting photos for our Mystery Photo section. If you have one and would like to share it, please email it to us!



## SPRING PROGRAM— THE DOCTORS OF THE BACKBONE RIDGE

Our next program will be May 7<sup>th</sup> at the Logan Community Center. A special feature of this event will be an overlap with the Logan Community Center Spring Bazaar. The Bazaar is scheduled from 9 to 3 and the Program from 2 to 4. This will provide an opportunity for later Bazaar Patrons to stay for the Program and earlier Program Patrons to visit the vendors at the Bazaar. Please plan to attend both and support your local organizations.



The main presenter at the Program will be Charles Fausold of Hector, presenting on his ancestor Dr. Gillmor (see photo to left) who lived near the Schuyler-Seneca County line in the vicinity of Innocentville. Dr. William S. Gillmor of North Hector (1855-1907) was born in a log cabin on the Backbone Ridge and went on to become one of the leading citizens of the area. Like other country doctors he treated everything from measles and scarlet fever to broken hips and kitchen table amputations. Although he didn't know it, he played a role in one of the most significant medical discoveries of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Come hear his story and that of the time and place in which he lived.

We are also expecting Joe Baldwin of Trumansburg, who published a book on Patent and Proprietary Medicine Bottles of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century to talk about Dr. Hill who lived in Farmer and commuted to Ithaca daily on the train where he practiced and prepared medicines. Joe will share his knowledge of some very rare medicine bottles. In addition John Feller expects to share some tales of his Grandfather Dr. Townsend who grew up in Townsendville and practiced in Trumansburg, traveling the east side of the Backbone Ridge with horse and buggy calling on patients at all times of the day and night.

Additional information about this Program and the Bazaar will be posted on our website as it becomes available [www.backboneridgehistorygroup.com](http://www.backboneridgehistorygroup.com) and will be in a mailing and on posters throughout the area a couple weeks before the event. It would be much appreciated if you would mark your calendar now. We hope to see you on the 7<sup>th</sup>!

## MAIL BAG

Dec. 26, 2015

Hi Allan,

Christmas greetings to you and Ann and the girls!

I found your article about haying and the "jump hay press" very interesting, and I will try to add a little more information. My grandfather-Will Green (my mother's father) jumped on one of these for several years. He told me about it on a number of occasions. He was born in 1882 in West Danby, NY, and lived locally his whole life. He blamed his stomach problems in later life on his years of jumping. He was a slight man and the man on top in the photo is exactly his build. He traveled with a crew that went from farm to farm. They ate a noon meal with the family they were working for. My grandfather liked gizzards and was always looking forward to eating one, if chicken was on the menu. He said at one particular farm, he should have known better, when he saw the lady of the house shoo the hens off the table as the men came in to eat, but he went for the gizzard anyway. When he bit into it, he discovered that it had not been cleaned!. He lost his appetite for gizzards for a while!

One other item about the jump press. There was an old heavy piece of white cardboard hanging on a nail in the old barn at the farm. It had a long list of numbers, and on several occasions my father or my uncle would tell me that those numbers were the weight of bales when the jump press was at the farm. Each bale was weighed on a set of platform scales which I had until the auction in 2006. I can clearly remember a large barn which was used only for loose hay to be baled in the winter. I don't think the upright press was still being used when I was a kid (1940's), but I do remember hay being baled out of that barn by a stationary press, run by a belt off an old tractor. I also remember watching that barn blow down in a windstorm in the late 1940's. As I recall, the weights recorded on that piece of cardboard were all over 200 pounds-generally 230-270#. Unfortunately, that tally sheet was lost when the barns all burned in 1976.

Hope this is of some interest.

Bill Gates

Photo from The Backbone Fall 2015 Edition:



# AN UNEXPECTED DISCOVERY

BY ALLAN BUDDLE

Periodically some very interesting documents come to light. Just last week BRHG Web Master Dan Huston came up for a visit to his old family stomping grounds in the Logan area. A look at the Hector 1874 Color Map on the BRHG website will reveal a number of Huston residences. Dan brought with him two documents that are of special interest. The 1867 Warranty Deed for the site of School District No. 27 and the 1927 Tax List for School District No. 29. Both are reproduced in part below:

**Warranty Deed  
September 17, 1867**

**Between** William W. Spence and Charity his wife of the Town of Hector, County of Schuyler and State of New York of the first part, and The Trustees and Taxable Inhabitants of School District Number 27 in the Town of Hector of the second part,

Witnesseth: That the said party of the first part, in consideration of the sum of Fifty Dollars to them duly paid hath sold and .....do grant and convey to the said party of the second part, their heirs and assigns, ALL THAT TRACT OR PARCEL OF LAND situate in the Town of Hector, County of Seneca and State of New York, bounded as follows being a part of Lot Number Fourteen in said Town of Hector, beginning at the Southwest corner of Said Lot in the Center of the highway thence North Eight Rods, then East Ten Rods, then South Eight Rods to the Center of the highway, then West Ten Rods to the place of beginning containing one half acre of Land to have and to hold the Same for School House Cite (sic) and when the Taxable Inhabitants and Trustees of Said District shall cease to occupy the Same for School purposes then Said Lot Shall Revert to the party of the first part or his heirs and whenever the parties of the second part shall cease to occupy the above deserted premises for School Purposes they are to have the privilege of moving off the buildings from Said Lot.

Names of taxable inhabitants and corporations	Acres	Lot
Arcangelli Lewis	25	53
Allen Oakley	25	52
Brown Wm. S.	15	52
Broderick H.	9	52
Burnett Chester	95	62
Creighton Wm.	220	43
Creighton Wm.	99	53
Creighton George	81	42
Carpenter Ruth	14	51
Chesley Jabez	40	53
Chesley Jehile	43	52
Chesley Jehile	75	53
Dunham Minor	132	61
Fish Eugene	55	59 60
Hyatt Field Est.	10	52
Jacquish Alva	26	52
Jacquish Carrie Est.	16	52
Kidd Chauncey Est.	20	52
LaBar John	10	53
Mattison Lewis	128	61
Maloney Wm.	50	53
Nichols Chauncey	60	52
Olson George	40	51
Palmer John	95	62
Palmer John	14	52



# MAIL BAG

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

2 January, 2016  
Happy New Year !

Claudia K. Melin  
449 Irish Settlement Rd.  
Freeville, NY 13068  
[ckm6@frontiernet.net](mailto:ckm6@frontiernet.net)

Backbone Ridge History Group  
P.O. Box 64  
Trumansburg, NY 14886

Dear Allan & All:

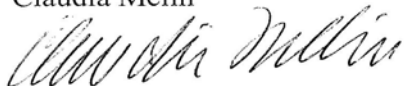
My husband and I enjoyed reading about the re-dedication of the Reynoldsville cemetery. We've been noticing the cleanup and improvements there, whenever we're visiting the National Forest area. Somehow, reading about those who were here before us brings them to life, along with their time period. Every person has a story.

You might be interested in this assortment of old newspaper articles—about Backbone Ridge events, and all the people who participated in them. Perhaps they might be items in future newsletters, either as page fillers, or possibly entire stories in the newsletters. My personal favorite in this assortment is “Heroes Remembered”, although the longer article about a mid-winter poultry exhibition is also a gem.

The stories that are printed in the Backbone newsletter—most recently, about haying— bring us much enjoyment and spur us to reflect about all that has changed.

Wishing you all a Happy New Year,

Claudia Melin



**Backbone Ridge History Group**  
**PO Box 64**  
**Trumansburg, NY 14886**

Trustees:

Sandra Bradford, Doris Pike, Rose Smith, David Smith, Kelly Paonessa Terry, Charlotte Dickens, Phil Davis

Officers:

Allan Buddle, President; David Beckhorn, Vice President; Gerard Messmer, Secretary; Julie Clawson, Treasurer; Rose Smith, Membership Chair;  
Newsletter Designer/Editor, Kari Milliman Gauntt; Daniel Huston, Webmaster

Trustee meetings are held at 7:00 pm on the third Wednesday 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](http://WWW.BACKBONERIDGEHISTORYGROUP.COM)

**For new and renewal memberships, please send \$10 to Membership Chair, Rose Smith, at PO Box 64, Trumansburg, NY 14886. The red dot on your mailing label indicates that your membership has expired. Please renew and help us continue to share our common history.**

**Backbone Ridge History Group**  
**of Schuyler, Tompkins and**  
**Seneca Counties**  
**PO Box 64**  
**Trumansburg, NY 14886**