

The Backbone

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

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

MYSTERY PHOTO



This photo was in a private collection that contained others from the Logan area. If anyone has any information about this, please let us know!

Next Event:

Townsendville Families

Sat Sept 17th

From 2-4pm

At Lodi Rod & Gun Club

See inside for details!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Mystery Photo	1
President's Update	1,2
Hector Farmstead	2
Schoolhouse Program	3,9, 10
Townsendville Family Program	4
A Sunday Morning Visit	4,5, 8,
Treasure Saved—Dr. Sears Safe	6
Townsendville Map 1874	7
Pearl Hazard Interview	8
Charter Members	9

PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

Greetings from the Backbone Ridge. Thought I would share a few lines from the Diary of Herman T. Smith, 1884, transcribed by Marsha E. Smith and Judith L. Cone in 1993. The lines give us a feel for Herman's life that year the first week in September. Herman lived halfway between Townsendville and Farmervillage.

September 1- A fine day. John and I finished drawing oats, 2 loads, and drew rails to lay on the fence around the field by the barn in order to turn the cows in for a change of pasture. September 2- Oh what a fine day. John and myself hauled manure.

September 3- An extremely hot day. We hauled manure and finished it at five o'clock and then I went down to the depot and got 500 of coal of Eli Morehouse (1.25) and a grain scoop at the hardware 1.10.

September 4- Another very warm day. I plowed. Dem made a visit over to Delia Tunisons. T.C. Tunison came up hunting for his sheep. In the evening John went up to prayer meeting, stopped to Stephen Westervelt and got a plow point and paid for the one I got in June 26. I received a letter from David.
(continued on page 2)

HECTOR FARMSTEAD

The photo placed in the last edition of "The Backbone" was submitted by Jean Kerns Larison of Ovid, New York. The house was occupied in the 1930's by Moses "Jack" and Addie Kerns and Brad and Ruth Weir and the children of the latter (Barbara, Carolyn, Jeanette and Roger). The photo was taken in 1988 and is of a Hector Farm that was called the "Cherry Rill". Thank-you, Jean, for sending that in!



PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

September 5- A fine day. I plowed. Mrs. Van Lieu of Lodi Center hung herself this morning. Mr. Tunison called. I am not feeling verry extra. Have drank too much cold water of late but am better this evening. Intended to take Mr. Medlock's gentleman home this afternoon but did not feel able to stand the pressure.

Cemetery restoration will continue this fall on October 24, 25 and 26 on the Potts Family Cemetery near Reynoldsville, the Clawson Family Cemetery on Seneca Road near "cats elbow" and the Shannon Family Cemetery just South of Townsendville on Townsendville Road. Please watch for more specifics in the local papers and on the BRHG website www.backboneridgehistorygroup.org.

We hope you can come and help in some way even if it is just providing information about those folks who are buried there.

I also need to correct a statement that appeared in the article reporting on work at the Curry Family Cemetery last fall. It was reported that two Revolutionary Soldiers were buried there when, in fact, we can only be assured of one. Follow-up research and input from the Curry Family has convinced us that William Curry is the only Revolutionary War Soldier buried in the Curry Family Cemetery.

Enjoy the newsletter and remember we would love to have stories, photos, anything that contributes to the record of the Backbone Ridge and the surrounding communities. I can always be reached at orchardland@zoom-dsl.com or 607 532 4213 if you want to discuss anything that you think you might like to contribute.

Allan Buddle

ONE ROOM SCHOOLHOUSE PROGRAM

The July 17, 2011 program “Sharing Memories of Country Schools on the Backbone” took place on one of the hottest days of summer, even so there was a good turnout with almost 40 people attending. The setting was an actual one-room-schoolhouse that had been acquired by the Reynoldsville Community Club and well maintained - very close to its original state, blackboard and all.

Jerry Messmer the chairman of the BRHG’s Publicity Committee was responsible for overall organization and as usual acted as the program’s Emcee. He opened the program at 2 PM by having the entire group rise and repeat the “Pledge of Allegiance” followed by a silent prayer; this allowed the attendees to reminisce on their school days long gone by. He then asked how many had actually attended a one-room schoolhouse, surprisingly about fifty percent of those present had.

Jerry then recognized a few individuals who had helped make the program possible; Doris Pike for organizing the building, Schuyler County Historical Society for providing insurance cov-

erage for the day, Walter Gable for the intermission slide show on “One-Room Schoolhouses”, Bobbi Beckhorn and Julie Clawson for organizing the fantastic refreshments.

There was also a very special guest that Jerry introduced; Kari Milliman who is responsible for the publishing of the quarterly newsletter via the internet all the way down in Texas. Kari was up here on vacation and her surprise visit brought smiles to many faces, but then maybe we should blame her for the *heat-wave*. Jerry then introduced the President of the BRHG Allan Buddle who thanked everyone for coming, commented on the upcoming Fall program at the Lodi Rod and Gun Club and asked anyone interested to sign up for the quarterly newsletter.

As usual Jerry did his homework before the program; he got all the facts on each speaker prior to the program and provided a great introduction for all.

(continued on page 9)

Below, Marian Boyce tells the audience what it was like to be a student in a one room schoolhouse.



TOWNSENDVILLE PROGRAM

SAVE THE DATE!



The Backbone Ridge History Group proudly presents...

TOWNSENDVILLE FAMILIES

Saturday, September 17

2 to 4 p.m.

Lodi Rod and Gun Club

3.1 miles south of Lodi on
Lodi Center Road
(County Road 137)



H
E
E
P
&
W
O
O
L

Program :

- Carole Harth --Early History of Wool and Sheep Production in Schuyler and Seneca Counties with a Focus on Townsendville
- Open Forum for questions and sheep story-sharing from those present
- Power Point Introduction to Anne R. Knight's latest book *Families of Townsendville: Yesterday and Today*
- Refreshment Break and Book Signing by the author

For further information, contact Gerry Messmer (607-387-9669).

A SUNDAY MORNING VISIT

A family wedding on July 9, 2011 brought together many of the sons and daughters of the late Lyman and Heyltje Stewart Bond. Fortunately for me especially, and for those of us collecting the history of the Backbone Ridge, I was able to spend two fun packed hours with William (Bill), Anthony, Mary and Sarah hearing their stories of growing up on Ball Diamond Road and later years after they moved up onto the "Project". Lyman was the Schuyler County Ag Agent later hired by the Franklin D. Roosevelt Administration to acquire the lands that were eventually to become the Finger Lakes National Forest.

(continued on page 5)

A SUNDAY MORNING VISIT
(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)

After being hired, Lyman moved his family to the Grazing Headquarters, leaving the “homestead” referred to by Bill as the Flood Farm which is located immediately east from the Round School.

Bill is the senior of the siblings. He and Mary recall going along with their Dad when he visited the farms being acquired by the U.S. Government but recall none of the conversations. What they do recall is playing with the kids on those farms and reading their comic books which were strictly forbidden at home. When asked about recollection of sentiments regarding giving up their lands the family learned later that some apparently were relieved to be getting out from under operating loans that they could see no way of ever paying off. There was also sadness for some who would be the last of many generations on the same property. Many of them were hired to help set up the grazing lands, putting up fences, applying lime and fertilizer and building ponds. Once at lunch break Lyman noticed that some of the hired men were sitting off by themselves eating from their lunch pails. When asked why they didn't join the rest they said they were embarrassed that all they had in their lunch pails were potato peelings. They were being paid fifty cents an hour. Many of these workers were exchanging ration stamps designated for shoes with others in return for ration stamps for sugar and flour.

It is important to note that information in the last paragraph is provided by the Bonds. Others may recall similar or dissimilar information which will be gratefully received and acknowledged.

When asked what the roads were like on the Backbone, Mary recalled narrow dirt paths, hedgerows on both sides and a grass strip in the middle that disappeared by mid-summer. Others may have additional information about the roads which we hope you will share.

Many stories of attending the Round School were shared. The building itself, although round rather than rectangular provided the same function and amenities as most one-room schools of the time- several grades, one teacher, a stove in the middle of the classroom, two out-houses, a well and pump with one dipper, a Superintendent and a Truant Officer. The school is located in District No. 30 in the Town of Hector but is in a different location than shown on the 1874 Atlas. Perhaps the one on the Atlas was moved or replaced. What made each of the one-room schools unique was the personalities of the teachers and the students as they came and went. These are the things that memories are made of and that people like to share.

At one point when the Round School was about to be closed due to the push for centralization, those families that wanted it to remain open contacted a Mr. Lurch who they knew believed in the style of teaching that they preferred. He was retired, having been teaching since 1899, but was convinced to come out of retirement to teach in District No. 30. Mr. Lurch was a strict disciplinarian with a rubber hose always within easy reach. Other teachers recalled by the Bonds were Lillian Richards, Carolyn Fenton, Mrs. Murray, a very spirited music teacher and Mrs. Wiley from the Valois School who taught military tunes.

A dog by the name of Stub was a regular attendant at the school always sleeping under the stove. The heat from the stove activated Stub's fleas and the Bonds still remember the regular drumbeat of the dogs elbow on the floor as he scratched. Dana Goodrich, the Truant Officer, came to school one day and expressed great disapproval of a dog in the classroom. The teacher told him sternly that Stub had not missed a day of school all year and he was staying. He did.

(continued on page 8)

A TREASURE SAVED – DR. ALFRED SEARS' SAFE

Anne Knight called recently to inform the Backbone Ridge History Group that the Arch Knight Farm near Reynoldsville was for sale and the safe used in Dr. Sears Practice was in the house. An Amish Family from Williamsport, Pa purchased the farm including the buildings and about seventy acres. They are repairing the house and barns and will have a small dairy there.

Thanks to Anne's concern, the half-ton safe with A. Sears M.D. stenciled on it was rescued and is now in safe storage awaiting a permanent home. The residence of Dr. Sears can be located on the accompanying map of Townsendville which appears in the 1874 Atlas of Seneca County.

Dr. Sears was the late John Knight's great grandfather and fortunately the family preserved the safe, the original (1879) *Bill of Lading and Instructions For Operating the Combination Lock*. The safe was shipped by rail to Trumansburg from the Mosler Safe & Lock Company, Cincinnati, Ohio.

The following information about Dr. Sears was included in *An historical sketch of the Seneca County Medical Society, with some account of its living and of its pioneer members. (1887)*

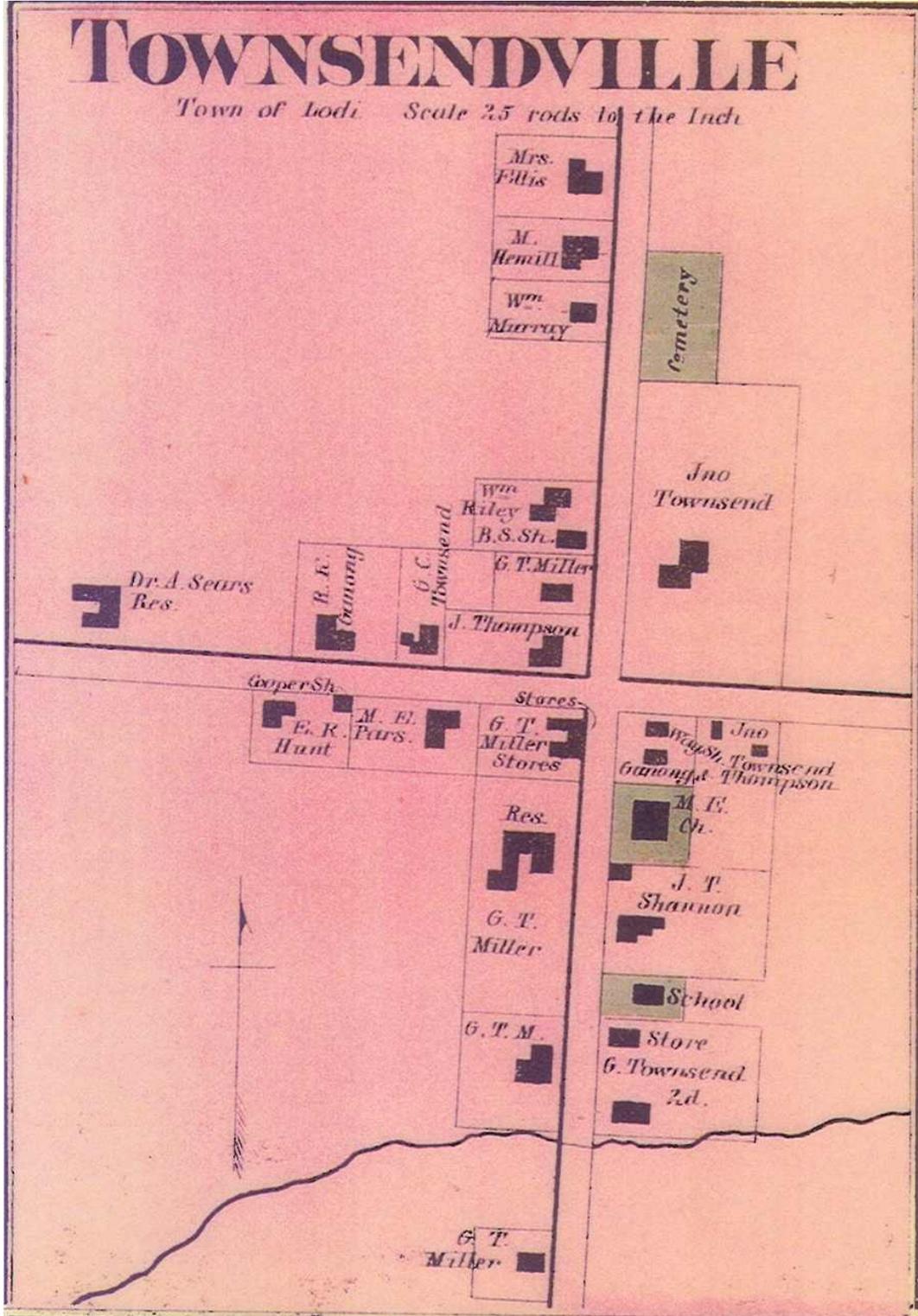
"Alfred Sears, born at Hector, Tompkins county, N. Y., October 19th, 1818, was the second son of Thomas B. and Maria Sears, and spent his early days with his parents, assisting his father in farm work. He received a primary education in the district school, and at the age of fourteen left home, spending four years in study at the Penn Yan and Genesee Wesleyan Seminaries. With the exception of teaching during this interval, Dr. Sears' life has been devoted to no other pursuit than his profession. Having completed his academic studies, he registered with Dr. Henry Spence, of Starkey, Yates county, N. Y., and began at once his work in medicine, attending lectures, first at the Geneva Medical College, and afterward at the Berkshire Medical College, Massachusetts, graduating from the latter institution in 1840. In February, 1841, Dr. Sears located at Townsendville, Seneca County, N. Y., and has continuously practiced at that place until the present time. The Town of Lodi honored him with the office of Supervisor for two years, and he held the Postmastership of the village of Townsendville for eight years. He married, in September, 1846, Harriet Woodworth, from which union three daughters were born. Dr. Sears, during his long and honorable record of forty-six years, has always been accorded the kindness and support of the community in which for so long a time he has been a trusted and respected medical adviser."

If anyone has additional information that they would like to share, please let any of the trustees know.

Submitted by Allan Buddle



TOWNSENDVILLE 1874



PEARL HAZARD INTERVIEW

Pearl Hazard was interviewed on June 6, 1995 by Anne Knight and Ted Day as a part of an oral history project that was undertaken by the Interlaken Historical Society. Pearl was born on April 8, 1908 and although he never lived in Townsendville himself, his grandfather Arnold and his father Francis Marion (Frank) both lived in Townsendville. Following is an excerpt from the interview.

AK: I assume he (Frank) helped in (his father's) blacksmith shop. What kinds of things did they do there? Besides shoeing horses, I suppose he made things out of iron.

PH: Yes, he made, repaired wagons

and buggies and all of that and I have a very interesting account of one of the, what they call running gears to a buggy. Should I tell it?

AK: I'd love to have you tell it. It's exactly what I'd like to hear.

PH: Well, he rebuilt running gears to a wagon or a buggy type of wagon. It had the high wheels on it. And of course he made wheels and put the tires around them and all that. So he did that to this wagon and parked it by side of his shop and two of my uncles figured that Butcher Hill would be a nice place to try that and see how fast it would go. So they wired a plank to the springs on the wagon and started their trip down the hill, trying to steer it with a rope. Well they finally

made the trip clear to the bottom and there was about three or four spokes left in each wheel when they got there.

AK: Must have been a few trees in the way?

PH: And mind you, this was all rebuilt, the thing was new, painted and everything. So they pulled it back up the hill and parked it back where they got it. When my grandfather wanted to sell it, it wasn't in very good shape. But nobody knew anything about it.

Pearl had a very interesting life. He passed on March 10, 2011 at age 102.

A SUNDAY MORNING VISIT (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5)

I could go on and on but there is a limit to space in a newsletter. We consider this visit just a beginning and hope to have many more as we explore Bond Family memories of life on the Backbone. Two parting comments related to Bill driving

his Model A down Sawmill Gulley **sideways**, and a location by the name of Struble's Corners.

Does anyone know where Struble's Corners is located?

Submitted by Allan Buddle



C H A R T E R M E M B E R S

The following lists those who have become Charter Members and received their Charter Member Certificate as of July 31, 2011. There is still time. Memberships received by December 31, 2011 will become Charter Members and support the publication of the *Backbone*, programs such as the one described elsewhere in the newsletter and planning for more in depth research, interpretation and education. In order for all families on the extensive mailing list to continue receiving the *Backbone*, the trustees have extended the deadline for membership sign-ups for another year. All memberships, contributions and bequests are tax deductible.

Charles Baldwin
 Donna Bauman
 David and Roberta Beckhorn
 Donna Beckwith
 Marian Boyer
 Alta and Charles Boyer
 Naomi Brewer
 Allan and Ann Buddle
 Beverly Burnside
 Pauline Burr

Jim and Lois Carter
 Neil Chaffie
 Barbara Chapman
 Richard Chesley
 Ted and Julie Clawson
 Fay Combs
 Nancy Combs
 Richard and Janet Compton
 Bonnie Covington
 Claraneal Creighton
 Robert Crippen Jr.
 Barbara Cullen Chapman
 Jean Grant Donahue
 Thomas and Christina Donahue
 Ann Marie Stout Doyle
 Brent Dugolinsky
 Tim and Sally Eller
 William and Irene Elkins
 William E. Fenton
 Peggy Field
 Bill and Denise Fletcher
 Walter Gable
 James Hazlitt
 Walter Hollien
 Terry Holt
 Steve Huber
 Richard and Carla Hunt
 Anne James
 Gloria Kellogg
 Robert Kibbee
 Karen King and David Drumheller
 Anne Knight
 Dave Lacy
 Jean Larison

Elizabeth Mai
 Joan Martin
 Rosalie Mayo
 Harry McCue
 Betty J. McKnight
 Sarah Mehta
 Gerard and Mildred Messmer
 Gary and Linda Milliman
 Wayne and Patricia Morrison
 David and Dawn Moser
 Erin and Gunther Kurtz Nyquist
 Edward and Jean Ormondroyd
 Doris Pike
 Christine Ridarsky
 Edna and Will Sayers
 Dan and Mary Ellen Schreher
 Bill Sebring
 David Smith
 Dave and Rose Smith
 Charles R. Smith, PhD
 Jim and Georgianna Stevenson
 Dave Stillman
 Gretchen Swartz
 Keith and Kelly Swimley
 June Szabo
 Bill and Frances Taylor
 Denise Teeter
 Michael Tunison
 Wesley and Carol Sue Uitos
 Marci VanDerHeide
 Ovia Vesa
 Charles and Sarah Wright
 Ed and Hazel Wright
 Carolyn Zogg



ONE ROOM SCHOOLHOUSE PROGRAM (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

The first speaker was Doris Pike who gave an abbreviated summary on the building's history, abbreviated only because it was a main topic for a similar program one year ago at the same location. This time her topic was the history of the Burdett School from formation to closing. She also gave a summary of all the one-room schools in the Town of Hector in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. The second speaker was Marian Boyce of Townsend, Town of Dix Historian for the past 21 years. She spoke of her experiences attending one-room schools at Dix No. 4 Baker Hill and Dix No. 6 in Townsend during the first six years of her education. She also summarized the other one-room schools in Dix. Marian added information about the years during WWII, when she worked for the U.S. Dept. of Stabilization Program in Schuyler County. Where she and her boss Walt Johnson of Hector went each spring and recorded (by ear tags) the animals brought to graze at the Hector Grazing Association and in the fall, made sure everyone got their own stock back.

Backbone Ridge History Group
 Of Schuyler and Seneca Counties
 5046 Route 1, Searsburg Road
 Trumansburg, New York 14886

Trustees

Charles Baldwin
 David Beckhorn
 Roberta Beckhorn
 Sandra Bradford
 Robert Crippen
 Gerard Messmer
 Doris Pike
 Denise Teeter

Officers

Allan Buddle, President
 Julia Clawson, Vice
 President
 Walter Gable, Secretary

David Smith, Treasurer
 Newsletter Designer/Editor
 Kari Milliman

**ONE ROOM SCHOOLHOUSE PROGRAM
 (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)**

This was followed by a well-deserved, intermission with home-made baked goods, ice cream and cold drinks provided by the refreshments committee. Special thanks again go out to Bobbi and Julie! During the intermission attendees took advantage of a great powerpoint slide show that Walt Gable put together on one-room schools and the numerous historical poster displays provided by Marian Boyce, Sandy Bradford, Walt Gable and Doris Pike. The day's final speaker was Bill Elkins of Burdett who provided detailed information on the centralization of the Watkins Glen School District, which involved the closing of the last remaining country schools in the Towns of Dix, Hector and Reading. Bill talked about the mixed feelings associated with the closing of the country schools. He also brought a copy of and read from the deed for the building where the Town of Hector was the Grantor and the Reynoldsville Community Club was the Grantee.

Jerry closed the program shortly past 4 PM by thanking all those who attended and reminding all of the next program on the "History of Townsendville" in September at the Lodi Rod and Gun Club.

Submitted by Bob Crippen

Backbone Ridge History Group
 /c/ Hector Cattle Grazing Cooperative
 5046 Route 1 Searsburg Road
 Trumansburg, NY 14886