

# 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

## MISSING FARMSTEAD



Potts Cemetery  
Restoration Day—  
L: Deborah Potts  
McLaughlin and R: Mary  
Potts

Here is a photo of a house that was not one purchased by the government but it's whereabouts are unknown.

Does anyone have any information about this photograph?



### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Missing Farmstead	1
Note from Ranger	2
President's Update	1,3
Potts Cemetery	3,4
Walking Tour Upcoming Program	4
Hector Grazing News	5
A peek into Arch Knight's Journal	6
Excerpt from Anne R. Knight's upcoming book	7
Branching the Hector Backbone	8

## P R E S I D E N T ' S   U P D A T E

Welcome to spring which is working its way up from the valleys to the Backbone. This is one of the best times to hike before the leaves are full, while the wildflowers are in bloom

and while evidence of the old homesteads is most obvious. On behalf of Rose Smith, our Membership Chairman, who is enjoying the California coast with her

husband, we want to report that the first response to the BRHG membership drive has been very heartening. (Continued on page 2)

## A NOTE FROM THE RANGER



A note from the Finger Lakes National Forest:

"After a long winter, spring is finally here on the National Forest, and with that our main field season has begun. Once again we'll be hosting a Youth Fishing Derby in early May, and have numerous other events planned throughout the summer. We are also looking forward to having Dr. Wurst back on the Forest furthering her study of the Homesteads located on the Backbone Ridge. We hope to see you all out and about, be it at Dr. Wurst's Walk and Talk on May 7 or at one of the other events on the Forest".

Jodie L. Vanselow, District Ranger

## PRESIDENT'S UPDATE (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

(continued from page 1)

We hope even more of you will become Charter Members of this enthusiastic group as we continue to search for and present all aspects of history of the Backbone Ridge and the surrounding communities.

If you are checking the BRHG website ([www.backboneridgehistorygroup.org](http://www.backboneridgehistorygroup.org)) from time to time you will see additional links to local history sources and soon interactive maps to help you find and learn more about the history of the many components of the Backbone Ridge community of yesteryear including mills, blacksmith shops, one-room schools and more. The site also provides one-stop shopping for programs and events in the communities surrounding the Backbone Ridge. Bob Crippen, our Website Manager is happy to include information for your organization's events. He can be reached at [rcrippen54@yahoo.com](mailto:rcrippen54@yahoo.com).

We are pleased to report that the Backbone Ridge History Group has received a grant from the Nelson B. Delavan Foundation to publish *The Families of Townsendville, Yesterday and Today*, by Anne R. Knight, Townsendville resident and historian, author, artist and sheep farmer for many decades with her late husband John. A program to introduce the book and celebrate Townsendville history is tentatively scheduled for September.

As always, if you have any history to share, be it stories, letters, photos, journals, diaries or you just want to visit, please contact any of the trustees.

And last but not least thank you to Kari for assembling all of the pieces of this newsletter, to Finger Lakes National Forest Staff for printing it and to the volunteers for doing the mailing.

Allan Buddle, President



# POTTS CEMETERY RESTORATION

After weeks of tracking down the property owner, permission was granted for the Backbone Ridge History Group to tackle another abandoned cemetery. The cemetery restoration program is a community outreach service of the Green Mountain and Finger Lakes National Forest led by Dave Lacy from the Green Mountain National Forest in Vermont, where this type of program was started and has become very popular.

Continuing the trend of the wettest April on record, the first week in May and especially the day of the cemetery project was no different. Fortunately our ancestors wisely placed small family plots on rises not affected by wet conditions. The Potts cemetery is no exception and the hardy Potts Family, neighbors and volunteers from the BRHG cleared brush and dangerous trees, removed a cover of periwinkle and soil from stones that had

fallen over, raised some stones and cleaned and recorded the information from the stones. All of this was done carefully under the watchful eye and knowledgeable guidance of Dave Lacy. Not all of the work needed was able to be accomplished in one day, so a return trip will be scheduled.

Larry Potts noted that he hoped he could get the family together every year or two to bring a picnic lunch and keep the cemetery up after the restoration has been completed.

Photos below:

Left: Dave Lacy and Gerard Messmer

Right: Larry Potts and Dave Lacy

(Continued on page 5)



**UPCOMING PROGRAM BY DR. LOUANN WURST  
FARMSTEAD ARCHAEOLOGY PROJECT**

**WHEN:** May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2011

**TIME:** 6:30 p.m.

**WHERE:** Hector Presbyterian Church, Hector

**TOPICS:** Updates on the Farmstead Archaeology Project: Recent Research and Current Plans

**SPEAKER:** Dr. LouAnn Wurst, Western Michigan University

Dr. LouAnn Wurst will present a thirty minute talk on the archaeological research being conducted in the Finger Lakes National Forest. She will present the results of last summer's work at the R. Henry and A.C. Wickham Farms, describe the goals and objectives of this year's field work, and summarize our future plans.

Four MA students from Western Michigan University will also present brief overviews of their research using the Finger Lakes data. Dustin Conklin will discuss his research into the preconditions of farm abandonment, land classification and agricultural productivity; Mark Hooch will describe his plans for a landscape analysis of agricultural production; Jayne Michaels will present her project to research transformations in domestic production, in particular food preservation technology; and Stephen Damm will discuss his ideas relating to the impact of household age structure and kin networks on consumer behavior as seen in the archaeological assemblages.

**WALKING TOUR OF FARMSTEAD SITES HELD MAY 7, 2011**

The walking tour of the farmstead sites excavated on the Finger Lakes National Forest was a huge success! Dr. LouAnn Wurst hosted over 35 people and the group visited sites that her students have excavated over the last decade. It was a little muddy, but it didn't dampen the spirits of the people that attended. The tour covered the following sites: Al-bright, Mc Netton, Creighton, R. Henry, Smith, Ball, Chesley, and School House #29.



## POTTS CEMETERY RESTORATION, CONT'D

(continued from page 3)

Helping with the project were two neighbors, Hollen and Mark Smith. Hollen brought along the following information that he had copied from the stones in the cemetery and place in his book in 1945.

David Potts  
February 7, 1784- March 29, 1868  
Susan Potts (wife)  
February 8, 1798- March 4, 1864  
Above lot enclosed by iron fence.

Andrew Potts  
1740- 1828

Mary Potts (wife)  
1758- 1830  
Above lot enclosed by iron fence.

Alexander Potts  
Died 1822, aged 24 yr 11 mo + 10 days  
Above a natural carved and engraved stone

One of the stones in the cemetery had the distinctive carvings of E.B. Smith whose work continues to be discovered in these old cemeteries and has been reported on in earlier newsletters.

Submitted by Allan Buddle



## HECTOR GRAZING NEWS

Here is some of the history on the Hector Cooperative Grazing Association that might be of interest to you. Most people in the area know of HCGA and that it has been in existence since 1939, and in 1943 they became incorporated as a Non-Profit Organization. Over the years several thousand animals have grazed on the Finger Lakes National Forest by many local farmers. Some have been long gone but several of the members are second generation farmers who continue the tradition. The grazing of cattle is open to any area farmers that wish to graze cattle by joining the cooperative. The cattle help the FLNF maintain the grasslands on the forest for birds and wildlife and many forms of recreation.

What many people do not realize is the positive impact that the HCGA has on the local economy. Over the years, it has been a steady form of employment for many local people. Everyone knows someone who has grazed cattle or has worked for HCGA over the years. Many horse riders from all over the state have come to this area to help with the roundup of cattle over the years. However, the largest contribution HGA has made is in the financial contribution to the local economy. All of the grazing fees that are collected are worked off in the form of fee credits with the FLNF which in turn helps fund the Grazing Program. All of the operating expenses and salaries are generated within itself through the cost of grazing cattle.

We are a Non-Profit Organization with no additional financing from any outside source. All of the money collected is spent locally. We support many local small businesses. Over the last twelve years alone, well over \$1,214, 554.00 being spent locally. A rough breakdown of some of the expenses are \$108,332.00 in local fuel, \$635,531.00 in salaries, (all local people) \$154,448.00 repairs done locally on vehicles and equipment and \$30,631.00 on miscellaneous expenditures spent locally. Plus we have to add the cost of utilities, insurances and NYS expenses which make up the rest. We operate on a very tight budget which is overseen by a Board of Directors all being local farmers or businesses relating to farming.

Submitted by Charlie Baldwin

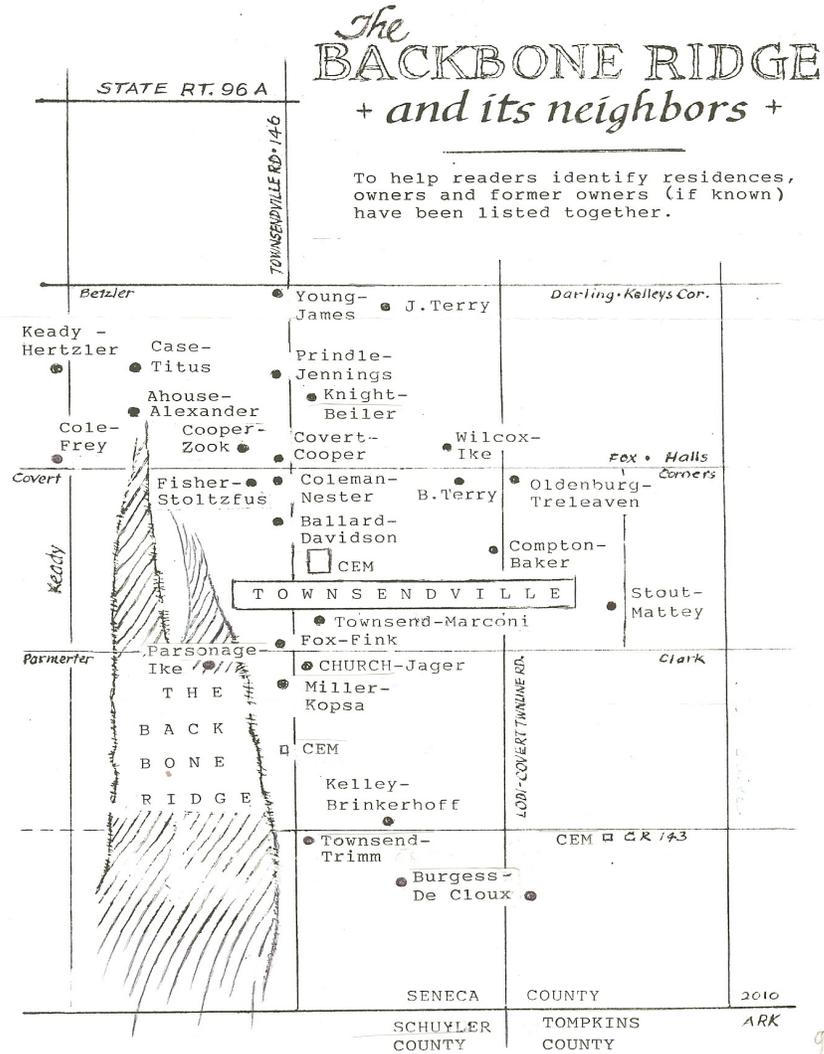
## FROM THE JOURNALS OF ARCH C. KNIGHT

Below is the complete inventory of livestock and equipment needed to successfully operate the farm of Arch C. Knight in 1916. The farm was located at the northern end of the Backbone Ridge in the Town of Lodi, a farm which was not abandoned during the depression nor was it one of the farms purchased by the Resettlement Administration. From the journals of Arch C. Knight. Submitted by Anne R. Knight

### Arch C. Knight's Horses, Stock and Tools April 1, 1916

Nellie 11 yrs., Jim 12 yrs., John 12 yrs.	\$500
Daisy and Louise	100
Sheep (22) @ \$8	168
Chickens (103) @ \$1	103
Binder	20
Reaper	20
Tedder	25
Mower (2)	40
Rake	8
Drill (1/2 interest)	35
Roller	6
Manure Spreader	60
2 Horse Cultivator	30
3 Harrows	15
3 Plows	12
2 Cultivators	8
Millburn Wagon and Rigging	50
Old Wagon and Rigging	25
Fanning Mill	15
Scales	30
Pleasure Sleigh	15
Separator	40
Grass Seeder	5
Potato Digger	6
Grindstone	4
Corn Sheller	3
Bag Truck	2
Pork Crock	3
Oil and Barrel	8
Meat (Haves, Shoulders, Pork)	50

**A SNEAK PEEK  
INTO ANNE R. KNIGHT'S UPCOMING BOOK RELEASE**



The above map is taken from Anne R. Knight's soon to be released book entitled "The Families of Townsendville, Yesterday and Today".

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**BRANCHING THE HECTOR  
 BACKBONE  
 BY JUNE B.W. SZABO  
 BASSWOOD SCULPTURE**



The Hector Backbone is the highest ridge between Seneca and Cayuga

Lakes. It is a series of hills covered with forest, pastures, vineyards and wandering streams. Perennial streams, which contain water in the driest seasons, have created beautiful gorges and ravines. Ephemeral streams, which flow intermittently, leave evidence of their existence with depressions in the soil, exposed rock and a lack of vegetation.

It is difficult to comprehend the direction and connection between the many wandering trails of water. Following a stream on the backbone may not foretell its final destination. Viewing a map reveals how the backbone is embraced by a network of branches created by many small streams. A watershed for Cayuga and Seneca Lakes, the destination of precipitation that falls upon the backbone is a matter of chance. Is the wind blowing and from which direction; is there a pond, puddle or even a pebble to send a drop of water in one of many directions? Water seeks the path of least resistance and is directed by the earth beneath it. These are streams of consequence – precipitation, elevation, topography and the geology of the backbone are the creators of these branches.

Branches are sections, parts, members; they combine, unite, consolidate and solidify. They occur naturally in the merging of streams, the formation of plants, and in the development of our own bodies. They are the means thorough which our tissues are nourished and we achieve the use of our arms, legs, finger, and toes. This pattern which occurs naturally is necessary, efficient and elegant. We adapt the pattern using it consciously and subconsciously as we build relationships. The branching of streams creates rivers, lakes and oceans, something larger and greater. Branching out to the world around us, its affinity, complexity, and diversity makes us more complete; for we are only a small part of something greater.

Submitted by June B. W. Szabo