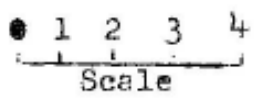
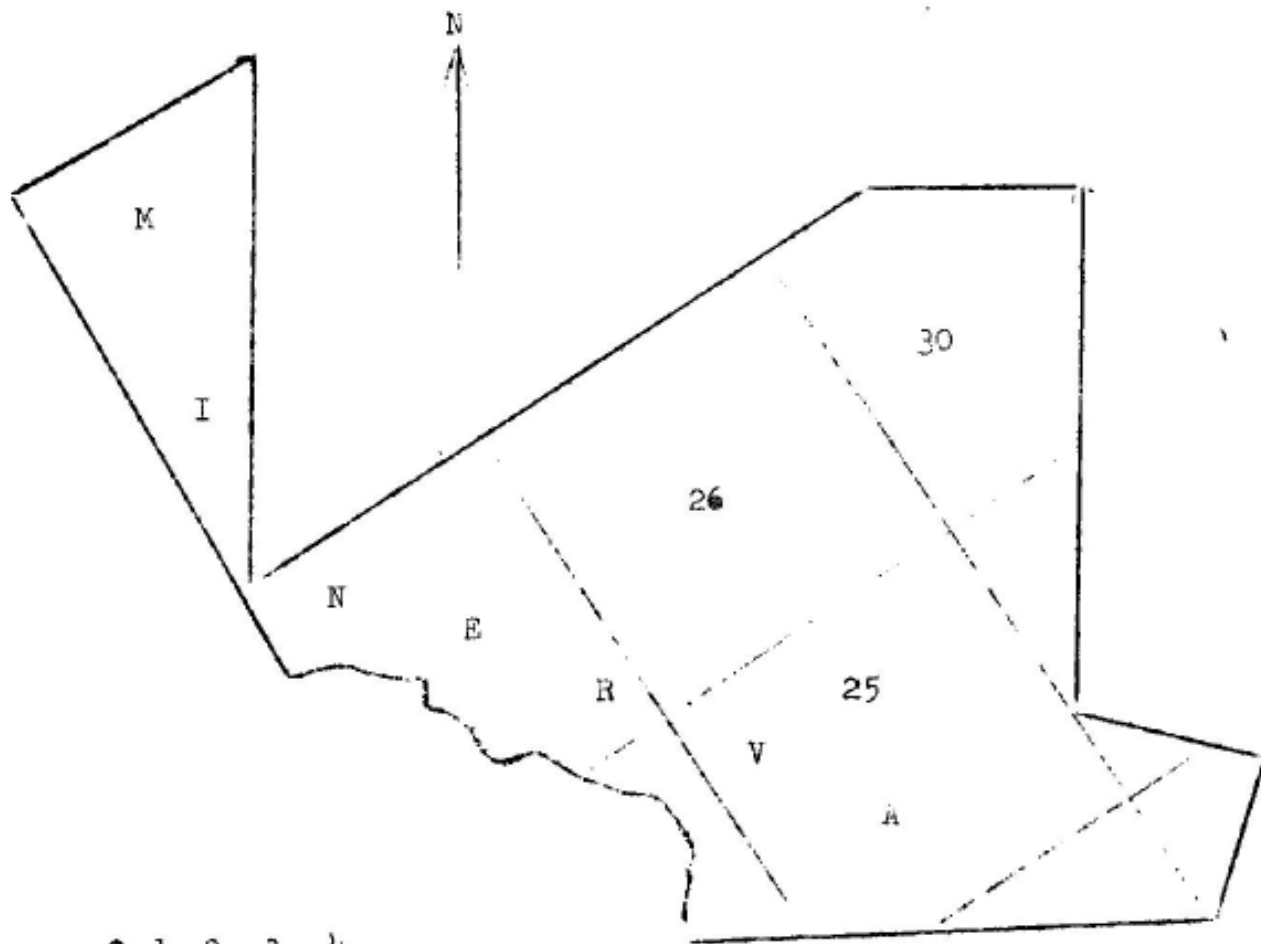


THE  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF THE  
TOWN OF MINERVA  
QUARTERLY



A Town in Essex County  
New York

## MEETING

The July meeting of the Minerva Historical Society will be held in the auditorium the Minerva Central School, Olmstedville, on Tuesday evening, July 27th, at 7:30 p. M. The program will feature a fashion Show, displaying styles from the past to the present. This program is open to the public and there will be no charge. There will be an opportunity for you to join the Historical Society if you wish. Dues are two dollars for the year. Quarterlies will be on sale to non-members at 250 each.

The narrator for the event will be Ruth Wortman. Miss Helen Barnes will play appropriate background music for the different eras. Committees for the fashion show are:

- Research - Brenda Foley, Patricia Hewitt, Eleanor LaBar Suzanne
- LaRocque, Shirley McNally and Alice Switzer
- Publicity - Albertus Mitchell
- Makeup - Beatrice Eggleston
- Wardrobe - Elsie Butler
- Stage and Lighting - Robert Savarie.

## \*\*\*\*\* OFFICERS

At the April meeting, the following officers were elected:

- President - Mabel Jones,
- Vice President -
- Doris Wells
- Secretary -Andrew Halloran
- Treasurer - Katherine Halloran

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## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The executive committee met in June and appointed the following Committees:

- Program - Mr. and Mrs. John Switzer, Mr. and Mrs. Charles LaBar, and
- Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Porter
- Membership - Shirley McNally, Andrew Halloran and Doris Wells
- Refreshment - Mollie Barnes and helpers whom she may appoint

At our executive meeting in June, it was also decided that we should become members of the Essex County Historical Society and pay the annual dues of five dollars.

Have you visited the Essex County Museum at Elizabethtown? If not, you should do so, by all means. It is located in the old brick school house. Behind it and, at one side is a beautiful

Colonial garden which is kept up largely by volunteers. Since the Museum received a special grant from the New York Council on the Arts, many improvements have been made in the exhibits and displays. Increased dues and a grant of \$2000 from Essex County have made it possible to open the Museum for a longer time, allowing school groups to visit.

During the summer the Museum will be open from 9 to 5 six days a week and from 1 to 5 on Sundays. Admission charge is 500 for adults and 250 for children with special rates to school and camp groups, by arrangement.

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#### HELP WANTED

The following is a portion of a letter received from Mr. Thomas Haynes, 24 Vine Lane, East Northport, N. Y., 11731:

"I am interested in any information you may have regarding Early American signboards and woodcarvings. It is my intent to attempt to reproduce some of these signs, such as those of inns, taverns, hotels, coach lines, blacksmiths, etc. It would, therefore, be necessary for me to have pictures, or prints for this purpose if they are available. I would appreciate knowing the cost of obtaining such material."

Does anyone have pictures showing such signs which were at one time displayed in Minerva?

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#### GIFTS RECEIVED

From Harold Atwell - The slides that he took of the Sesquicentennial parade in 1967.

From Patricia Hewitt - The negatives of the pictures that she took at the Sesquicentennial in 1967.

From Shirley McNally - A copy of a picture of Helen Barnes and Jack Sullivan taken at the dinner given in Helen's honor upon her retirement this year. The dinner was held at the Mountain View Hotel in Minerva on January 23rd, when Jack was Master of Ceremonies. He and Helen are both members of the Minerva graduating class of 1925. A few years ago Harold Thomas gave us a picture of this class.

GIFTS WANTED FOR SLIDE COLLECTION

One of the newer projects of the Minerva Historical Society is the formation of a library of colored slides. Those who have been long time residents of the area are invited to donate slides of their families to this permanent record of Minerva's history. Informal poses or candid shots are desirable. The individuals in the picture should be identified, and a thumbnail sketch of the family would be welcome. These may be left with Mabel Jones or John Switzer of Minerva.

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THE PLAQUE

In May, the Plaque which was given to the Town by the Historical Society, and dedicated. Nov. 11, 1970, was placed in a stone setting in front of the Town Hall. The work was done by some members of the Town Highway Department, with Mr. Louis Hanna as mason. Top soil was drawn in to make the lawn level and new grass was, planted.

Members of the Adirondack Mountain Garden Club have planted red, white and blue flowers around the base of the monument, after a design drawn up by Mrs. Arlene Epple. The planting was done by Eleanor LaBar, Mildred Porter, (members of the Garden Club and the Historical Society) also Jane McDevitt and Virginia Hubschman, Garden Club members.

All of this has added much to the appearance of the Town Hall and we are very grateful to those who have had a part in it.

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CHURCH CENTENNIAL

St. Joseph's Church in Olmstedville is celebrating its 100th Anniversary this year. On July 25th, at 10:00 A. M., there will be a special mass which will be attended by the Bishop of Ogdensburgh. The Rev. Wilfred Nugen, a former pfi9tor, and the Rev. Bernard Kellogg, a native of Minerva, will assist Father Charles Flaherty in the mass.

At the close of the mass, refreshments will be served by the Altar and Rosary Society and copies of the history of the parish will be on sale for \$2.50. Those wishing to reserve copies in advance may contact Patricia Hewitt or Shirley McNally of Olmstedville.

## MINERVA HUMOR

## Recollections of Clarence Jones

In 1911, when the road from Jennie Jones' corner to Aiden Lair was hard surfaced, there were a number of men brought in from the outside to work as laborers. Most of them spoke only broken English and they were under the care of a Mr. Numerofski. Temporary shacks were put up to serve as homes for these people.

One such shack was occupied by Daniel Boltach and his wife Katie, and stepdaughter, Mary Stanton. It may be that Katie cooked for the men. After the road was completed, most of the men went elsewhere, but the Boltach family decided to stay and they moved into the house on Minerva Hill formerly occupied by Michael Lyre. Several years later, they moved to the Leonardsville area and occupied the house owned by Louis Burnell.

Mr. Boltach was called by townspeople "Danny, the Pollock", but census records show that both he and his wife were born in Austria. Though Daniel had lived in America a number of years, his English was very poor and he still had many things to learn about this country. His mistakes furnished amusement for his neighbors in Minerva, and especially the men who worked with him on the town road crew.

He, himself, told, about his first experience with a skunk. —One of these creatures got into his hen house and was feasting and creating great pandemonium. Danny was not armed for combat, but was not one to retreat and leave everything to the robber. With only a stick he stalked the animal saying, "Here Kitty, come", until he got near enough for a blow. He was near enough also for the animal to retaliate. Much to his surprise he received a blast of some foul-smelling substance right in the face and eyes. As he was relating it to the road crew, he said, "Three-time round house, no find door — Call Katie come — Three day no eat bread —In my country, no such animal."

The Boltachs had four children born in Minerva, John, Nicholas, Alice and Rose. Sometime after 1925, the family moved from Minerva. A few years ago, one of the sons with his wife, stopped in the store to chat a few minutes. He was then living in Broadalbin.

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From: Every Day Cook Book and Family Compendium, Ad 1892

## CURE FOR RHEUMATISM AND BILIOUS HEADACHE

"Finest Turkey rhubarb, half an ounce; carbonate magnesia, one ounce; mix intimately, keep well corked in glass bottle: DOSE:

One teaspoonful, in milk and sugar. the first thing in the morning; repeat till cured. Tried with success."

## SOME MEMORIES OF BALFOUR LAKE

By Vera Savoie Stenley

## PART I

As was the wont of the wealthy in the days of yore, they sought to buy large tracts of land for their own use. All the land around Balfour seemed of this fate. Only scant lumbering had taken place, and most was used as fuel or hewn timbers notched at the ends to build houses. Others could have been sawed at the small mill on the outlet of Balfour Lake. It is doubtful if it was then known as Balfour, as on many survey maps it is referred to as Long Pond. I recall part of the mill pond dam and fished beneath its falls many times and have a picture of my father shoveling to restore something or other at the dam. There were also shingle machines to cut shingles for roofs and siding.

Mr. Nathans was one of these buyers and, after securing Leonard Savoie, a young carpenter, for his superintendent or caretaker, he began to develop his land. Some rustic cottages were built. All buildings were separated, joined only by long covered walks. The main camp had a huge fireplace and plush covered window seats, built in wood box, and animal skins for rugs. A large porch overlooked the lake and there was a portico from which to welcome guests. The sleeping rooms upstairs also opened onto a deck. This building was joined to the dining room by a walk and another covered walk led to the kitchen. There was an ice house with cooler, a root cellar and a large roofed open shed for wood. Mr. Nathans had barns, wagon houses and stables to house his splendid riding horses and there was a kennel for hounds. There was a fancy rustic plank bridge on the outlet of the lake. Mr. Nathans must have been a man of great hopes and high aspirations, as he sought to create a permanent home among the local people, and endured at least three years to prove it. Then he sent for his bride-to-be, and she arrived with all her lady's maids and trunks of clothing to impress the gentleman of her choice. She had riding habits, a side saddle and a special mount and hounds at her side. The rails were rough and the local girls laughed at her weak effort to convince her fiancé that this was what she wanted. Her stay at Balfour was short, and did not persuade her to embark on a frontier adventure. She attempted to convince him and did return to the city to prepare for the wedding.

The young man had a honeymoon cottage erected quite aside from all the others. However, she never returned to his "paradise" in the mountains, but said, "Now it's a lady's prerogative to change her mind, so I'll wait your return to the Westchester Estate." She never wavered from this decision and the honeymoon cottage went

unused until the property changed hands once more. Just how long he waited in hopes she might change her mind is unknown. It is a well-known fact that Mr. Nathans did not return with his bride nor did he remain in Westchester County immediately following their wedding.

If Mr. Nathans had no matrimonial luck for a time, his care-taker did, for he married a young attractive woman familiar with her surroundings. After a short trip to visit his family so they might meet his bride, he brought her to Balfour and she cooked for all present. Leonard SPvcie married Pearl Foote, originally from Hague, in the year 19023 02 1903. Everything continued in much the same way. The guests arriving from the city for fishing and hunting were hungry young men.

On March 3rd of the year 1904, I opened my lungs and gulped in a batch of the cold air. The attending doctor drove his horse and cutter eight miles from Olmstedville. There was a blizzard and the wind howled from off the lake. The big iron monster that served as heater, cook range, and hot water heater sent out its warmest glow.

When Vera Savoie, for that is the name they had given me, was nine months old, Mr. Nathans decided to return to Westchester County and marry his fiancé. He took the Savoie family with him and Papa and Mama worked for him and his wife in Briar Cliff and White Plains for three years.

The next change at Balfour occurred when Mr. Nathans sold the property to a Mr. Frank L. Zabriskie about 1906 or 07, and with the exchange and transfer of title went my father and his family back to his beloved Balfour. The Zabriskies came into North Creek by train and had a livery man bring them the fourteen miles to the camp, where my mother had prepared their dinner and they retired for the first night of adventure. The 'kangaroo' mice in the attic sounded like lions and the hoot owl on the dead tree branch called 'whooo'. They awoke on the morrow to prepare for the summer before them. They sought relaxation and nature at its best and it was all about them in abundance.




The years spent in the employ of the Zabriskies were some of the best of my youth. I received marvelous Christmas gifts, was treated like a dear friend to their only daughter Mildred, with whom I still correspond. There was Mildred's grandfather Zabriskie, with his long white beard and meerschaums pipes, who looked like Gimble's Santa Claus and one half expected the red suit and pack any minute. There was Miss Powlise, who was prim and sedate, Mrs. Zabriskie's companion, known by the family as 'Aunt Polly'. She just frightened me, and I kept away from her. Mrs. Zabriskie was a delicate bit of a lady, enjoying ailing health, who wore high buttoned shoes, high ruffly blouses, and jeweled chokers. She always dressed fancy to go on her husband's arm to dinner.

A gentleman, called Uncle "Jimmy" Mason, the sexton of the Little Church Around the Corner in New York City, played tennis with Mildred and developed most of the activities a sedentary family needed. We went on picnics away to the other end of the lake, rowing there in shiny, varnished St. Lawrence boats. After eating our lunch with cloth spread out, we picked berries or gathered apples for the pies my mother made. Back at the boats we picked and lilies, yellow and white, for the table that night. It was a wonderful summer day for a child so young and I enjoyed being a part of it all. There was swimming or bathing, but it wasn't much fun because the bathing attire of those days left little hopes for the early development of the Australian crawl. It was a tight waisted skirt over the knees, a bodice with square neck and puffed sleeves, all with white braid to make it look nautical. A pair of bloomers beneath the full skirt really floated behind, well into the air. There were also cotton stockings and sneakers. I never found out whether the above gear was responsible for my being slow in learning to swim, but when I was fourteen, I became really quite good at it, but in more modern attire. We all played croquet and I watched tennis. A few times, Mildred would have some girls from her school v her. This was always exciting and increased the fun. Balfour Lake is nestled among high hills and was surrounded by privately owned land. At the inlet was one such place owned by a playwright, Miss Alice Kauser. She had several buildings and a studio built, but came rather erratically. Sometimes, she would spend three or four summers, then not appear again, leaving it to the hedge hogs. At one time, she developed a beautiful flower garden. I remember Miss Kauser well with her bee hat tied under her chin to keep away the black flies. Her brother Benny, who was an actor, with his daughter had a cottage close by. Margaret Anglin of Broadway fame was a visitor. I never saw Miss Anglin at Miss Kauser's, but I knew she had visited there.

It was around the head end of the lake that there remained traces of an old road. to Newcomb. It went through Balfour clearing, passed near North Woods, and Moose Pond Clubs, and came into Newcomb where the Chasson Road is now. The road across the Kauser property went from Briar Patch or the John Galloway property. Parts of the road across Rankin Brook were of corduroy, so were still in evidence when I was young.

During one of Miss Kauser's visits to her property, she secured a very reliable caretaker which necessitated the building of quarters for him. This is the house now owned by Miss Eva Ward, and the care-taker was John James, who had previously been caretaker at Hewitt Lake. His son had taken over the duties there. Hewitt Lake Club always had two caretakers. This Gate House, as it became known, was later purchased by my parents and operated as a tourist business.

To be concluded

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