

The Historical Society
Of the
TOWN OF MINERVA

Quarterly
October 1971

Volume I - No. 3

OCTOBER MEETING

Do you have a wooden lemon squeezer? A log marker? A curved sickle? A froe? Or a wooden butter mold?

If you do, bring it to the meeting of the Historical Society of the Town of Minerva which will be held at the Town Hall in Minerva, Tuesday October 26th at 7:30 P. M. If you can give its history and explain its use, so much the better.

Charles and Elenor LaBar are in charge of this program, which will be informal, with a number of people encouraged to participate.

JULY MEETING

Over two hundred attended the July meeting of the Historical Society of the Town of Minerva, giving enthusiastic approval to "Fashions on Parade", a program held at the Minerva Central School.

The unique show, featuring styles from the Pro-Civil War era to the present, utilized a formal garden setting with Grecian columns, lawns, and trees. A total of sixty-seven costumes were shown. Models were Minerva residents, some of whom were descendants of those who had once actually worn the clothes displayed.

An interesting section of the show was a presentation of bridal gowns modeled by young women of the town. The climax of the program was a "do-your-own-thing" pantomime in which modern dress prevailed

from the simplest blue jeans to the newest hot pants. A group of fifteen danced to recorded music of the present day in a colorful circle.

Much research went into the narrated script, the description of specific costumes, and the determining of the age and period of the fabrics to create an authentic performance.

RESTORATION OF ST. MARY'S CHURCH IN IRISHTOWN

The winter of 1970-71 had many heavy snow storms and few thaws. As a result, many roofs fell in. Among the buildings damaged was old St. Mary's church, built in 1848, in Irishtown. It is one of the oldest churches in the Ogdensburgh diocese, but has been little used since St. Josephs was built in 1871. It was last repaired in 1938. Encouragement and financial assistance are needed for this restoration project of historical interest, as the church was not covered by insurance. It was decided, since no diocesan funds were available, that the people of the parish would make the necessary repairs, depending largely on volunteer labor and contributions. Under the leadership of John Gallagher and Bernard Lynn, Trustees, several old fashion work bees have been held and much has been accomplished.

THANKS

We wish to say thank you to the "Cloudsplitter" for carrying a notice about our quarterly. As a result, at least two new memberships have been received, both from out of town.

A thank you also to Mrs. Helen James Jenkins of Hudson Falls for a gift of \$5, which came as a result of the Quarterly.

Our appreciation is sent to Esther Lynch Sheridan for the loan, for copying, of some letters which she found in the interesting old desk that was made by her grandfather, Daniel Lynch. One is a letter written in 1972 by Sheldon Hewitt who had moved with his family to Neilsville, Wisc. He is the man for whom Hewitt Lake was named. Other letters of later dates were written by Sheldon's daughter, Jane Hewitt Gates. Excerpts from these letters will be used in future copies of the Quarterly.

NEW FEATURE

A new feature is being started in this copy of the Quarterly. It will be called "THOSE WERE THE DAYS" and made up largely of excerpts from the Warrensburg News" of bygone days. Alice Switzer has spent many hours in the Warrensburg Library taping items from that newspaper, and later transcribing them. The one used in this issue is from another source.

THOSE WERE THE DAYS

"The ice cream sundae was invented in Evanston, Illinois in the late 1890s. At that time ice cream sodas were considered "stimulating beverages" and the city fathers passed an ordinance prohibiting the sale of them on Sunday. To circumvent the unpopular legislation, fountain operators began serving the ice cream and syrup without the soda --- thus creating the first ice cream sundae.

COMING EVENT OF INTEREST

The Minerva Community Chorus will present "The Rhythm of the Seasons: on November 13, 1971, at the Minerva Central School. This program is in the form of a musical almanac bringing to life the familiar scenes of the calendar.

The Chorus, consisting of more than forty voices, is planning the event for the benefit of the Scholarship Fund. The admission charge will be one dollar for adults and seventy-five cents for student.

The cooperation of area residents has been enlisted and various committees are engaged in preparing for this program. It is hoped that the entire community will support this benefit performance.

ESSEX COUNTY CENTENNIAL
1899

We have been reading a fascinating history of Westport, called copyright 1902, by Mrs. Caroline Halstead Royce.

In the introduction, Mrs. Royce says that in 1899 She was asked to write a brief history of Westport to be read at a Centennial Celebration. Each town in the county was asked to have a representative at the celebration to read a history of the town.

This is the first information we had about any such an affair, but a letter to Mr. James Bailey, Director of the Adirondack Center in Elizabethtown, brought the following information:

"We have looked through our files of Elizabethtown Post and were successful in finding an account of the celebration. The account is written in the June 8, 1899 edition of the Post. The article describes in detail the celebration held at the County Courthouse, Thursday and Friday, June 1 and 2. It consists mainly of reports of town histories and of a display of relics brought in from around the county.

Though not all the towns responded with a report, Minerva did. Quoting the Post reporter, Com. Henry Bradle presented the history of Minerva, the paper being handed to the chairman to be preserved for publication."

The chairman referred to apparently was Byron Pond. We looked in our files of the Board of Supervisors Proceedings and found mention in the 1898 report of the formation of a centennial committee. The suggestion was presented by George Brown on Dec. 7 and on Dec. 9 the committee was appointed, being simply a committee of the entire board. Thus, the Minerva representative on this centennial committee was its then incumbent supervisor Henry J. Callahan.

We have found no reference in later editions of the Post or Journal of Proceedings of the Board of Supervisors to any publication of the papers presented at the June 1 and 2 celebrations.

This celebration is a most interesting "find". And it presents us with some investigative challenges. All those papers presented would be most valuable if they could be found. Thank you for bringing up this topic. I shall continue to pursue it here in Elizabethtown and will let you know what turns up."

Sincerely,

/s/ James Bailey

The present membership of the Historical Society, Town of Minerva is 62. Our year runs from April 1st to March

We send out 70 copies of the Quarterly each issue.

SUMMER CALLERS

Elizabeth Kneip - Descendant of the Evans Family

Every summer there are former residents or their descendants who visit Minerva in hopes of learning something about their ancestors. One of those who came this summer was Mrs. Elizabeth Kneip of M. Arlington, N. J. She is a descendant of Robert Eveans who came to Minerva from N. Y. C. in 1815 and bought all of the land between the present Mt. View Hotel and 14th Road, 152 acres. His son Richard married Cynthia West, daughter of Anson and Hannah Gates West. Richard and his older brother William bought up much of the timbered land in the area and, did an extensive lumbering business, besides running a store which stood at one side of Clarence Jones' driveway.

Richard and most of his family moved to Minnesota and it was there that Mrs. Kneip was born and grew up. Her husband is an engineer and they have lived on an island in the Pacific as well as many places in the U.S. They and their four boys greatly enjoyed camping at "Camp-A-Lot" on the Pottersville Road.

Mrs. Kneip now has enough information on the West and Gates families to keep her busy for some time and she is delighted with all the ancestors about whom she had known nothing before coming to Minerva. We shall be seeing more of this family. She has joined our Historical Society, as has her mother, Mrs. Richard Evans, of Minnesota.

* * * * *

Robert Hoyt - Descendant of the Shaw Family

Another caller was Mr. Robert Hoyt of Gaylord, Michigan who came with his wife to say thank you for information which we had formerly sent him. He is a descendant of John Shaw, Jr., the first town clerk of Minerva, being elected in 1817. Henry Shaw, a son of John, moved with his family to Michigan while his brother, Collins Shaw, lived in Igera, just over the line from Minerva, in Warren County.

Mr. Hoyt has several old letters and pictures which he plans to present to the Chestertown Museum. One is a picture of Collins Shaw and his drum. Collins was a drummer in the Civil War and later taught several local people the art of drumming, among them Hollis Jones.

* * * * *

Edward A. Retelle Descendant of the Farrelly Family

Another delightful caller was Mr. Edward A. Retelle who came with his wife to see where his mother, Katherine Farrelly, grew up. The Retelles, live in Lawrence, Mass., where he sells fire protection equipment. After his visit he became so interested that he collected all of the materials he had on the Farrelly family and sent a copy for our files.

* * * * *

Mr. Retelle's great-great-grandfather was Philip Farrelly who was born in County Cavan in Ireland in 1803. He came to Minerva with his wife and three children about 1852 and bought lot 47 in Irishtown.

Their son Peter went to Boston about 1860 and learned to be a plasterer. After serving in the Civil War, he married and returned to Minerva and took over his father's farm. About 1889, his daughter Katherine was kicked near her right temple by a newly shod horse. Her life was despaired of and local doctors advised taking her to Mass. General Hospital in Boston. The operation was successful, but, since yearly checkups were required, the family remained in Lawrence, Mass.

There Katherine married Adolphe Retell: and they had eight children, one of whom is the gentleman who called in Minerva this summer.

* * * * *

VETERANS

Joseph Norton

Joseph Norton is one of the veterans listed in our town history about whom we knew nothing. From Mrs. David Haskell of Stony Creek, we learned that he was married in Minerva on Jan. 10, 1859 to Annie Pasco when he was 18 and she, 13. They appear in the 1860 census record, living with her mother, Ann R. Pasco.

Joseph enlisted July 29, 1862 at Johnsburgh in Company G., 118th Regt. of Volunteers. On the muster roll of that regiment the months of May and June, 1863, he is reported "Died at Hampton Va., June 1, 1863 of typhoid fever."

Joseph and Annie had no children and she did not remarry. She applied for a pension which at the time of her death in 1926 had gone up to \$30 a month. She died in Manila, P.I.

We are grateful to Mrs. Haskell for this information. Joseph's father was a brother of her grandfather

John Corscedden

A veteran of the Crimean War once lived in Minerva, in a house which stood where Charles McIntyre later lived on 14th Road. John Corscadden took part in the War while he was still living in Ireland and won a medal for bravery. It is said, that, when his house in Minerva burned, he mourned the loss of his medal more than anything else. John died in 1899 at the age of 75 and is buried in the Minerva Baptist cemetery. His niece, Annie Corscadden, who lived in his home, married Elmer West.

HUMOR

Some Recollections of Clarence Jones

I wouldn't want to say it out loud, but I think lying comes close to being a fine art. Here locally, competition was pretty keen and, in the days, when the country store stayed open until everyone had an audition, some were really classic tales. Harry Flynn ranked high in originality and skill in telling.

Harry: "Did you hear about Yankee Jhn getting bit?"

Chorus: "No. What happened? Did acme dog go mad?"

Harry: "No, he had his false teeth in his pocket and fell on them"

Once, before the days of sump pumps, there had been a time of in-cessant rains. All cellars in town had water of more or less depth and this was the subject of much concern and sympathy.

One evening when there came a lull in the conversation, Harry re-moved his pipe and announced that he found, a pitiful situation when he got home that night. The fire was out the house was cold and ap-parently deserted. He called to Maggie and wasn't sure if he got an answer. Nowhere in the house was it any clearer until -by the cellar door he was sure he heard something. He went down cellar and found that Maggie had gone down for some potatoes, had got into a wash tub and paddled over to the potato bin; and while she picking up the potatoes the tub had drifted away and 'there she was.

Entrants didn't have to be local. Anyone could join. A hunter from Staten Island was in with a fresh supply of tales one night and told about his dog's surpassing ability. Harry heard him through and then announced that he had a pretty intelligent dog. That dog would take a look at the gun and know immediately whether to look for birds or other game. Thinking to fool him, or to test him, Harry put the gun back and took down the fish pole. The dog disappeared and Harry, thinking his fun was over, went out to do some chores. down there by the barn was that dog -- digging worms.

* * * * *

THOSE WERE THE DAYS

The Warrensburg News - Nov, 2, Igera -- There were many people in this place presumptuous enough to say there is no such animal as a panther in New York State, but Wm. Cole says he knows better for while on his way to a neighbor's the other evening he was very badly frightened by one.

* * * * *

HAVE TIMES CHANGED

Bruce Wells of Minerva, driving to Alder Creek had a panther cross the road in front of his car between Raquette Lake and Eighth Lake. He was told by skeptical listeners - there is no such animal as a panther in New York State. (Labor Day Weekend - 1971).

SOME MEMORIES OF BALFOUR LAKE

by Vera Sovoie Stanley

Conclusion

The Galloways are a real part of the Balfour Lake story although their property did not border on the lake. We visited them from time to time and I recall the older Mr. John Galloway well. He was a huge man and sat on Briar Patch's porch in a cedar Jettie which was a comfortable arm chair for him. He had a voice commensurate with his size and caused me to shut my eyes tight until the visit was over. Of course, I was only about 4 or 5 when the old gentleman died. The next Galloways, his son and wife, we loved dearly. I knew her as Aunt Kate. John had been a jeweler in Brooklyn before ill health forced him to come north. Here he repaired furniture and fixed clocks. Besides the clocks that he was repairing he had many of his own and it was interesting to be in his workroom at a time when all the clocks were striking at once, with their many tones. He also made many beautiful bird houses which he sold to tourists. The Galloways had their own son and grandson who came for summer vacations, but earlier there were other boys, two of whom were Hallowells, Mr. Galloway's sister's boys. I played with them and enjoyed their Brooklyn accents. In the autumn after the Zabriskies had left for their winter retreat I would watch my mother and father play tennis while I scuffled through the leaves, now fallen and dry. They were pretty good at the game too.

The first five years after returning from White Plains to Balfour we spent completely at the camp. Papa had fixed and winterized one house for that purpose, even digging a cellar under the kitchen. We were happy through the long winter and I had started school at Aiden Lair with Miss Olive Jones as teacher. I loved being there and to play games with the Cronins, of whom there were several around my age. One of these was Theo, now Mrs. William Owens.

In 1912, my parents built the house at the foot of Minerva Hill where John Gallagher now lives, and we lived there during the winter. My father had a gravity water system and installed what was for that time a rather nice bathroom. About that time, he bought a Maxwell car which could be used only in the summer because of the snow. I now attended the one room school in Minerva which had forty to fifty pupils, in all grades. We pause in memory of those dedicated teachers.

The winters at Balfour were the snowiest, blowiest, frostiest of any place for miles around, but men worked hard in those days to cut and skid trees for firewood. The open shed had to have cords and cords of dry wood both for the cook range and the parlor stove with the isinglass eyes that the flames lighted up. Then there had to be logs to be burned in those big fireplaces on cool summer evenings. Then there was the icehouse to be filled, a couple days' chore. The caretakers around all joined and filled all ice houses at the same time. There were horse drawn, ice saws that partly cut and hand saws to finish. Men with ice tongs pulled the ice up a ramp onto the big sleds which were drawn by horses to the ice house where the ice was set in plocks with packed snow between and sawdust around walls and high over the finished top. These ice blocks were pulled into the

top of the cooler by tackle and pulley in the summer, and this is the place where meats and other perishable foods were stored.

My mother sewed and made quilts and tied and quilted the same, also hooked rugs and braided rugs as well. Why, my rag doll had the most clothes of any doll in the North, She was really resplendent with her yarn pigtails and beautiful blue eyes. Red lips and brown eyebrows and lashes. Embroidered features brought her really alive. She danced on her pretty black shoes made from an old pair of kid gloves. I had China dolls, baby dolls and the usual teddy bear, but my "Maggie" was the best of all. Mail orders brought marvelous Persian styles selected from a large catalog. The packages ordered and hidden until Christmas morning were wonderful. Then there was the peddler with all his wares. Boxes, black and mysterious, were sacked high on his buckboard, boxes of dry goods, pots and pans, and knick knacks galore, ribbons and sundries in a cupboard behind on a springy buckboard drawn by a very lean horse. There was excellent fishing and game of all kinds, plenty to go all around. One of the winters after we moved to Minerva for the winter, Papa either drove, fired the engine, or braked one c' those that plied the roads between the McIntyre Iron Development and the railroad at North Creek. These were called "tracks and engines". This was a very cold job and the men wore very heavy clothing to keep from frost bite. It also necessitated having someone else check the place at Balfour. This was one of the original "moonlight jobs" to stretch the low caretaker's salary around the family needs. saw picture recently in the Tahawus Cloud Splitter of one of these trains. The picture was loaned by Mrs, Ila Rogers of North Creek. Things remained about the same until 1920 when the property at the lower end of the lake -- the Zabriskie part -- was sold to three men, Mr. C. Amster, Mr. Philip Wechsler, and Mr. Manheimer who established a youth's camp. My father took on all of the additional supervision needed to get the project launched. There had to be sleeping cabins of logs, dining hall, kitchen, recreation hall, showers and plumbing planned and a power plant installed to be run by storage batteries and a generator. In addition, there was a grading problem for a baseball field, tennis and basketball courts. These had to be braded by horse drawn scoops and, pick and shovel and men with shovels and wheelbarrows. It was turned and seeded green and the tennis nets strung and backboards ready when the first 100 boys, ages 5 to 16, were trucked in from North Creek, after coming there by train. After answering the first call to mess and a filling meal, the campers rolled into their bunks and the lights flickered out as taps sounded for the first time. A really new era for Balfour was born. There were silent films shown once a week and the local people were welcome to come, the dramatic club put on a wonderful production each year, also open to the townspeople. Their masquerades were really wonderful, with fantastic costumes. The three men did not continue to operate together for long, but each went his own way, Mr. Wechsler remaining with the camp a few years longer.

Mr. Amster purchased another parcel of land from the Zabriskies and built first a girls' camp called "Chenawah", then a lodge in which he accommodated the parents. He was now married and his wife operated the girls' camp which was considered among the best in the Adirondacks by the Camp Association. A little later, Mr. Amster became full owner of the Balfour Lake Camp for Boys where my father was still working. Now that he had further responsibilities, my father suggested that a second caretaker be engaged. These were a few of them -- Charles Mueller, Harry Morse, and John Gallagher. After a time, my father took the responsibility alone again and we moved into a part of the lodge where there was a furnace and comfortable quarters.

Soon the Alice Kauser property was up for sale and Mr. Amster, Dr. Chasis, and Manny Bauman bought it as an investment. They rented it a few seasons, then Mr. Amster bought the others out and developed Camp Baco for Boys.

My father remained under Mr. Amster's employ except for a short time after he and mother had purchased the Gate House of the Kauser property and operated a tourist business there. This enabled them to go to Florida winters and enjoy the warmer climate for a few years. The house was later sold to Mr. Ward, and his daughter Eva now lives there.

Leonard Savoie now rests in peace in the knowledge that he gave the best of himself to the place he loved so much and believed in. He died as he lived, planning the next day's work on the knoll at Baco. He was explaining to his son-in-law all about it when he was gone, not to return to the knoll. His friend, Jake Wenger, planted scarlet color reminded poppies all around and later that summer their scarlet color reminded all who saw them of the man who had gone before.

<p>PERSON INDEX</p> <p>B Amster, C. — 9, 10</p> <p>B Bailey, James — 3 Bauman, Manny — 10 Bradley, Henry — 3 Brown, George — 3</p> <p>C Callahan, Henry J. — 3 Chasis, Dr. — 10 Cole, Wm. — 7 Corcadden, Annie — 6 Corcadden, John — 6</p> <p>E Evans, Cynthia West — 4 Evans, Richard — 4 Evans, Robert — 4 Evans, William — 4</p> <p>F Farrelly, Adolphe Retell — 6 Farrelly, Katherine — 5, 6 Farrelly, Peter — 6 Farrelly, Philip — 6 Flynn, Harry — 7</p> <p>G Gallagher, Bernard — 1 Gallagher, John — 1, 8, 10 Galloway, John — 8 Gates, Jane Hewitt — 2</p> <p>H Haskell, Mrs. David — 6 Hewitt, Sheldon — 2 Hoyt, Robert — 4</p> <p>J James Jenkins, Mrs. Helen — 2 Jones, Clarence — 4, 7 Jones, Hollis — 4 Jones, Olive — 8</p> <p>K Kauser, Alice — 10 Kneip, Elizabeth — 4</p> <p>L LaBar, Charles — 1 LaBar, Eleanor — 1 Lynn, Bernard — 1 Lynch, Daniel — 2 Lynch Sheridan, Esther — 2</p>	<p>M McIntyre, Charles — 6 Morse, Harry — 10 Mueller, Charles — 10</p> <p>N Norton, Joseph — 6</p> <p>O Owens, Mrs. William (Theo) — 8</p> <p>P Pasco, Ann R. — 6 Pasco, Annie — 6 Pond, Byron — 3</p> <p>R Retelle, Edward A. — 5 Retelle, Katherine — 6 Retell, Adolphe — 6 Rogers, Mrs. Ila — 9 Royce, Mrs. Caroline Halstead — 3</p> <p>S Savoie, Leonard — 10 Shaw, Collins — 4 Shaw, Henry — 4 Shaw, John, Jr. — 4 Sheridan, Esther Lynch — 2 Stanley, Vera Sovoie — 8 Switzer, Alice — 2</p> <p>W Wechsler, Philip — 9 Wells, Bruce — 7 West, Anson — 4 West, Cynthia — 4 West, Elmer — 6 West, Hannah Gates — 4</p> <p>PLACES INDEX</p> <p>A Adirondack Center, Elizabethtown — 3 Aiden Lair — 8</p> <p>B Balfour Lake — 8, 9, 10 Boston — 6 Brooklyn — 8C Camp Baco — 10 Camp Chenawah — 10 Camp-A-Lot — 4 Chestertown Museum — 4 County Cavan, Ireland — 6 County Courthouse — 3</p>	<p>E Eighth Lake — 7 Elizabethtown — 3 Evanston, Illinois — 2</p> <p>G Gaylord, Michigan — 4H Hampton, Va. — 6 Hudson Falls — 2</p> <p>I Igera — 4, 7 Irishtown — 1, 6</p> <p>J Johnsburgh — 6</p> <p>L Lawrence, Mass. — 5, 6</p> <p>M Manila, P.I. — 6 Mass General Hospital — 6 McIntyre Iron Development — 9 Minerva — 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 Minerva Baptist Cemetery — 6 Minerva Central School — 1, 2 Minnesota — 4 Mt. View Hotel — 4</p> <p>N Neillsville, Wisc. — 2 New York City — 4 North Creek — 9</p> <p>O Ogdensburgh Diocese — 1</p> <p>P Pacific island — 4 Pottersville Road — 4 Raquette Lake — 7 St. Mary's Church — 1 St. Joseph's — 1 Staten Island — 7 Stony Creek — 6 Tahawus — 9 Westport — 3 White Plains — 8</p>
--	--	--

 **SUBJECT INDEX**

A

automobiles — 8

B

Balfour Lake memories — 8, 9, 10

C

camping — 4

camps — 9, 10

centennial celebration — 3

church restoration — 1

Civil War — 4, 6

Cloudsplitter — 2, 9

community chorus — 2

costumes — 1

Crimean War — 6

D

do-your-own-thing pantomime — 1

F

family history — 2, 4, 5, 6

fashion show — 1

fire protection equipment — 5

fishing — 9

G

genealogy — 4, 5, 6

H

Historical Society membership — 3, 4

Historical Society meetings — 1

hot pants — 1

humor — 7

I

ice cream sundae — 2

ice harvesting — 8L

letters — 2, 4

lumbering — 4

M

medal for bravery — 6

military service — 4, 6

moonlight jobs — 9

music — 2

N

newspapers — 2, 3, 7

P

panther sightings — 7

pension — 6

photographs — 4

R

railroad hauling / tracks and engines
— 9

restoration — 1

S

scholarship fund — 2

snow damage — 1

summer callers — 4, 5

T

tourist business — 10

veterans — 6

V

volunteer labor — 1

W

work bees — 1