

NNHS NEWS LETTER

Northville Northampton Historical Society

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Editor
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I was sharing with a member of the historical society about an article that was written by Oscar Horton. He thought it would be a good article for the NNHS Newsletter. It is rather lengthy but contains so much history of the area. The Horton family lived on Maple Grove Road, which is northwest of the village, past the Prospect Hill Cemetery. Many of you will remember Sue Horton, Joan Horton and Homer Horton. One of my memories of Oscar was that he always had a float in the 4th of July parade. It most always consisted of an ox driven rig with some sort of interesting farm implement or animals on the wagon/rig. Oscar was a farmer by trade and also was a school teacher in his younger days. I also remember that he drove a large wooden sleigh for the area churches for their annual sleigh rides.

Maple Grove Road is a dead end road today, but many years ago it went over the mountain into Hope Falls. Oscar recalls the folks that lived on this road and that he taught school in a one room school house. The north end of the road in is Hamilton County and as it continues south east it enters Fulton County.



Kids: Paul Berry, Sara Spencer, Rosylinn Spencer, Craig girls, Suean Jordan, Janet Hayes, Jr Blowers, BJ Crannel, Linda Murphy, George Spencer, Hilda Fuller (teacher)

RECOLLECTIONS OF OSCAR HORTON

Time: about 1890

Several of my friends have asked me to write about Northville and vicinity while I was growing up. I will begin with the Steenburg district, a section of the lower part of Hamilton County, adjacent to the northeast corner of Fulton County. This should have been an annex to Northville, as the people living on the four mile long road all came to Northville to trade. I chose this road to start with as all living on it went by the place where I lived and grew up.

Starting with the Mason Place, which was 1400 feet above sea level, was the Stanton family and their children Ida, Eugene and Lottie. Lottie died when she was a young lady. The Stanton's attended the Baptist Church. They kept summer boarders. There were always young people living

them, either relatives or from broken homes. They were Willis VanHeusen, Minnie Corey, Jennie Earle and Susan VanHeusen. The later lived with Mrs. Edward Allen and later married Dr. Roy E Platner of Liverpool, New York. This farm contained six hundred and fifteen acres. There were four pastures, two for horses and two for cattle. These were alternated every two weeks.

The next place was that of Mr and Mrs John Sweetman. Their children were Anna, Ida, Ella, Emma, Satie, George, Leonard, Harry, Thankful and others. At one time all had diphtheria and Leonard and one other died. William Fayette Barker, Mrs. William Strobel's grandfather, sent up a barrel of flour and groceries from the

hard Pan Store to last a month.

The next place was the home of Mr. And Mrs. Nelson Herrick. I was too young to remember this incident, but the story was told that Mr. Herrick fell on a scythe and cut his stomach so his intestines nearly all ran out. His wife brought a dish pan, and he walked to the house carrying it in front of him. Dr. Clarence Blake was sent for. He said nothing could be done. Dr. Franklin Wright had just started an office here. He was called. He replaced the intestines and sewed up the wound. The man lived for years.

The next farm was that of Mr. And Mrs. Isaac Parks. Their children were Mattie, Sarah, Minnie, Eva, Ellis, and Eugene. Their house was built on a high hill and looked like a light-house at night.

Charles Grennell and wife and son, Carl, lived on the next place. The next farm was occupied by Mr and Mrs. Randolph Burgess. Their children were Westley, Sam, Chilena, and Eugene. Next was Mr. and Mrs. George Miller, with their children Rose, Alice and Moses. Edward Earle had married one of the Burgess girls. They were having trouble. One Monday morning he waited for her and when she opened the barn door, he stuck a beam knife through her. He threw the knife away and went to the nearest justice of the peace and gave himself up. He was the last man to be hanged in Hamilton County .

Mr and Mrs. Thomas Mead and Albert lived on the next place, with Mrs. Carrie Arnold , Frank and James. Mrs. Mead's brother ran a furniture store in Albany. Mr. Mead and Albert use to hunt the woods for pin maple. They sent the lumber to Albany.

The Steenburg school house came next. Services were held there every other Sunday. A minister from Benson and Hope preached at 3 p.m.; Sunday School each Sunday at 2 p.m. Fay Duncan was Superintendent. I used to go with him very often. This was quite a large school. Some of the teachers were; Clark Tanner, Isaac Bass, Truman Anibal and Carrie Snyder. I taught the last term before they joined the Maple Grove District. I was sixteen.

Next after the school was the home of Mr. and Mrs. Nathan Olmstead. Their children were Almond, Issac, Jeremiah, and Seymour. Next to them was Mr. and Mrs. Rhodes and children Wallace, Hetty, Georgia, and Edward. Mr. Rhodes was a soldier.

The Bowman place came next. Submit Bowman, Julius F Bowman's sister, married a man by the name of Barker. He died young. She then married William Thorton. He was injured seriously when he ran into a clothesline. Upon his death, she married Leamon Frost. Mrs. Leamon Frost was listed in Julius Bowman's obituary as his sister.

The next place was that of Mr. And Mrs. Jonas McClain. He was a soldier. He was a very large man. When he died, they had to leave the casket on the piazza, as it wouldn't go through the door.

Mr. and Mrs. Julius F. Bowman, with their sons, Ward and Isaac, lived on the next place. "Ike" worked in John Willard's sawmill for \$.75 a day and board. Later, he and Charles Greenfield had a photograph gallery over what is now the "Brass Rail". Still later, he formed a partnership with William L. Kested in the drugstore, first where the Northville Bakery is (*now the former video store*) and later where the present Lewek Drug Store is. (*now the Chinese restaurant*)

Oliver Steele and wife lived on the Fuller place. Zenas and his wife, with their children Guy, Fred, and Laura lived in one of the Steenburg places.

Next came the Maple Grove Schoolhouse. My sister, Lizzie Horton, gave it the name when she taught there. Here was a steep, rocky-branch road going up Hardscrabble Hill. On it lived a few families. First came Mr. and Mrs. Roscoe Ellsworth and their daughter, Leila. Next, Mrs. Sarah Travis and her children, Allen, "Bide", William, James, Mary, Minnie and John. Her husband was killed in the Civil War. The



next place was that of Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Van Heusen and their children Jacob, William, Susan and Isaac.

The next place was owned by John Van Arnam, great grandfather of George A. and H. Robert Van Arnam. Lodwick Wilson, a very successful horse trader, lived there.

Now we return to the main road to find the home of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Groff and daughters, Della and Cora (*some of you reading this may remember this place as the Frank Cramer Farm*) Next came the home of Mr. and Mrs. William Hall, then, Mr. and Mrs. Hiram Blowers and son, George. The next place was that of Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert Bennett with their children Charles, John Edward, Joseph, Francis and Dolly. Mrs. Bennett was the first woman to be buried in the Prospect Hill Cemetery.

Next lived Mr. and Mrs. Simeon Gifford and their daughters Laura, Gertie, and Satie. Their neighbors were Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Hare and daughters, Lillie, Mary Orrie, Ella and Eva.

Mr. and Mrs. Seneca Gifford, James Fountain, son Andrew, Dwella and Wallace Fountain, and Hattie Ferguson, a school girl, came next. These people had just moved from Benson, William Filkins worked for Sheldon Hubbell and managed his mill. He came to see Hattie frequently, but Mrs. Gifford didn't approve. One day he borrowed Hubbell's horse and wagon and drove to the schoolhouse. He asked to see Hattie. She got in the buggy and they drove off. First they went to Edinburg, then back to "Dominie" Gould's, a Baptist minister who married them. Hattie didn't go to school any more.

Mr. and Mrs. Philip Conklin lived at the turn of the road with their children Pearl and Laten. The next place was the Ames place, where I have lived for sixty-one years. In the Ames family were Aggie, Ella, Emma, Libbie and Josephine.

The next place was Mr. and Mrs. Fay Duncan. (*where the horse ranch is today*) Their children were Jennie, Angie, Ida and Charles. Mr. Duncan worked at the William Miner Saw Mill near the depot.

Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Bass and son William, lived at the next bend in the road. Mr. Bass manufactured paint-brush and brush-broom handles. He was a justice of the peace. His son became a lawyer in Northville. Isaac was a Civil War Veteran.

Mr. and Mrs. Graves Grennell lived at the next place. They were a nice old couple. Their children were married and had left home.

We now come to the John A. Willard property. The first house near the bridge was occupied by Charles William, a stone mason and his family. We now cross the bridge over Hunters Creek and are in the corporation of Northville. Mr. Willard built the first house for Lyman Fuller, who came to run the grist mill. This mill was run by water power from a pond covering about ten acres, but was not very deep. At this time, the government sent out weather signals. A line of banners was strung along Main Street in front of George N. Brown's Drugstore. Mr. Fuller was interested in the weather, as he didn't like to use too much water, unless it was going to rain. Each night, as I came from school, I would write the color of the banner on a paper and would get his mail at the postoffice for which I received 5 cents a day.

I worked in the mill every Saturday during the winter for 25 cents a day. My job at the mill was to feed the corn sheller, one ear at a time, and not clog the sheller. William Ostrander, Joseph Parmenter, George and Ezra Gifford, Robert Manzer and Lucien Gifford used to bring barrels of ear corn to be shelled for feed. All grist was tolled, so much for one hundred pounds. Mr. Willard had a novelty outfit attached to the grist mill and a saw mill over the creek, so sawdust, bark and all waste fell in the creek. He, also had a cidermill which consisted of a large vat, having slats about one fourth inch apart. Bags of apples were poured in the vat, and then it was filled with buckwheat straw. Two men pushed a long lever and squeezed out the cider. When this pond was frozen in winter, it was the scene of many skating parties. Charles Duncan and George Reed were among the expert skaters.

Northville had four hotels. (*at that time*) The Eglin House stood on the corner of Reed and Third Streets and was operated by James VanEvery, grandfather of Kenneth, Carl, and Charles.

Gardiner Winney was the proprietor of the Sacandaga Hotel which stood near the corner of Main on Reed Street. This burned September 5, 1888. The Northville House, operated by Monroe Place, is now the site of the Denton and Lipe Furniture Store. The hotel which stood on the former Harry Drake property was the Winney Hotel. The names of Raoul Asch, Gary Dopp, and Gardiner Winnie and Leon Anibal are associated with these places. A building built by John Willard for a livery stable and boarding stable for William H Grennell, was converted into a hotel in 1889. Names associated with the place was Al McCoy, Frank Kathan, Whipple and Harris and Leon Anibal. At this time it was known as the Anibal House and stood on the west side of North Main Street. When Henry Flewelling became proprietor, it was known as the Avalon. Franklin Wadsworth was the last one to manage it. It was then called the Tower Hotel and burned April 27, 1958. The Dopp House or Arlington Hotel stood where the Service station is near the corner of Main and Bridge Streets. This latter was known as the Lyon House and was operated by Mr and Mrs. Truman Lyon and was famous for it's fine home cooking. Truman Rice operated the Riverview Hotel which stood on the river bank and the old iron bridge.

At this time there were extensive lumbering operations being carried on. One hundred horses were required to do this work, with thirty men for drivers. To shoe these there were five blacksmith shops: Kested and Rullin on South Main Street where the Conservation Shop is (*now the Town Park*), Giles VanDyke Sr. on North Main Street near Reed, Wright Slocum on the corner of Bridge and First Street where Sweet's Shoe Store is (*also was Kested and Chequer's*), George Heina on Third Street and Emerson Wilson on Third Street.

Several feed stores were needed to supply the necessary grain. H. J. Resseguie; the old Post Office Building, Streeter Bros.; where the Brass Rail now stands, William Holleran; where the now fire house stands (*today it's the Pizza Café*), These establishments employed teams every day to draw grain from the depot.

Frank Kested had a harness shop where the Sugar Bowl now stands (*former Sacandaga Reality*) Seymour Brundige sold light and heavy harnesses at

The Holleran Store. Uriah Patrick made carriages at the rear of the present Pilgrim Holiness Church. (*Poulins Law Offices*) W. B. Abrams and son Robert, on North Third Street, carriages and blacksmith. Edward Roberts; carriage and blacksmith on South Main Street (*where the Town Park is*)



Charles Dennie Robitscheck's New York Store supplied clothing. Laurentz Beltzer, in the Willard Block on North Main Street, and Herman Werner, where the Mary Lincoln is, supplied tailor-made suits. (*Stewart's today*) Several women were employed to do the sewing. Meat could be had at Cook and Miller's where the Kitchenette is, and at William Holleran's and Seymour Willard's.

To clothe the ladies, Mrs. Lewis, Miss "Dell" Ford, Mrs. Lizzie Brownell and Mrs. Betty Palmer were dress makers. Mrs. H. Shipman, Mrs. Slocum and Lizzie Brownell made and trimmed hats. Later Mrs. Margaret Putnam, Mrs. Elizabeth Miller, Mrs. Ella Van Aram and Mrs. Delgato furnished the millinery.

Harvey Roberts, Oscar Burgess, Gilbert Rose and Samuel Benton had cooper shops where tubs and barrels were made. Alexander Resseguie made shoe lasts in the building which is now Joseph Lado's house, but it then stood on the property now owned by Willard Hopkins on Mechanic Street. These lasts were shipped to shoe factories. At that time many shoes were nailed together with wooden pegs. Norman Satterlee made stove and plows at his foundry on Mechanic Street. He made wooden measures there. Harry Brown, son of Mr and Mrs. George N. Brown was drowned in this pond. Pearl VanEvery and Allie Hanner were playing with him, but they succeeded in getting out of the water.

At this time there were no milk bottles or cartons. Michael Newton, Mrs. Eldon Boudreaus' grandfather, used to carry two large pails of milk and a long-handled pint dipper from door to door. He would dip a pint or quart into your pail, pitcher or pan. At this time, Charles and Herbert Ellsworth drove fifteen cows owned by the village people to pasture on the Ridge road. They received five dollars a year for each cow for the pasture and a dollar and half for the driving.

Laten VanArnam owned a farm on Main Street. He lived opposite the Bank, where the Veteran's Memorial is at present (*today the post office*) He kept a yoke of oxen to do the farm work, a driving horse and four cows. His pasture bars were on the corner of Division and Third Streets where Harry Lawton's Store was later. He usually had seven or eight lots sowed to buckwheat in the summer.

The Salvation Army held meetings in the Presbyterian church for a long time. They had services seven days a week. A deputy policeman was on duty every night to keep order. He usually put out two or three toughs every night.

Up to this time, Northville had no water system to fight fires. Michael Newton had a spring on the hill above Hunters Creek. He sold water to residents of lower South Main Street. There were two springs on Prospect Street and three or four wells. Nearly every house had a large wooden tub with a cover which was located in the woodshed or near the kitchen door. The water ran in half-inch lead pipes. Each family was allowed all the water that would run through a hole as large as a needle for five dollars a year. The pipes always froze in the winter. Neighbors borrowed water from each other. The trustees decided that Northville ought to have a water system. The Sacandaga River seemed to be the solution. Main Street was 800 feet above sea level. They thought if they went up the river far enough, water would run right over the village. After going up the river six miles, they found it was just level with Main Street. They then thought of Hunters Creek. On investigation, they found one branch started near the Mason Place and ran through the Olmstead Vlaie, and crossed the road on the Samuel Rhodes place.

These creeks kept coming closer until they joined on the Leaman Frost farm. Of course, there were little rivulets feeding these streams all the time, for about two miles. A short distance from where they joined, there was a natural place for a reservoir, with high banks on either side. This was the Charles Groff land. A Board of Water Commissioners was formed with Ray Hubbell as president, H. J. Resseguie treasurer, and J. A. Willard, secretary, and J. R. Van Ness was appointed Clerk. They bought the reservoir lot of 400 acres for \$350 with a right of way to the spot. E. B. Baker of Gloversville was employed at a consideration of \$180 to make plans and specifications for a system of water works. The contracts for several features were let March 6, 1891. When he came, he brought two pairs of mules, a wagon, two slush scrapes, shovels, pic axes and "paddy" wheel barrows. Next a surveyor worked all summer finding the best place for the pipe line. He chose the rockiest, roughest spring holes. Two men were blown to atoms and were never looked for. Many men were injured. Charles Straight, Miss May Straight's father, drew nearly all the pipe. Sometimes one pipe was a load. Then came the time to settle. Charles Groff had already been paid. Resseguie and Partridge owned the Fuller place. They sold the rights The Village Board offered Mr. Ames \$150., but he refused and hired a lawyer; but, when the court set, his lawyer did not appear and the case was thrown out of court. By this time, John A Willard had bought the Fay Duncan farm. (*horse ranch today*) The Board paid \$1400. for crossing the land and taking the water that ran the grist mill.

Isaac Bass wanted to settle for water as the pipe line was within fifteen feet of his house. The Village could not sell water to anyone outside the corporation, but he finally settled.

Laten Van Arnam offered the village \$1400. If they wouldn't cross his land, but they did and a short time later, William Foote and Harold Allen took a contract to go over the main road to Northville. A dam constructed across Hunters Creek, one and three fifths miles from the village had a capacity of 3,000,000 gallons. Water was used commercially September 13, 1891. Since then the reservoir has

been enlarged and improved.

I have heard that opportunity never knocks but once. I had a chance to work in the post office when I was fifteen years old. The hours were from 6 a.m. until 9 p.m. with one hour off from 5 to 6, for six days a week. For this you would receive \$5. a week. I didn't take this job and opportunity never knocked again.

I have tried to keep as near the truth as possible. This written after I passed my eighty-fifth Birthday. If I have made any mistakes, I apologize.

Oscar G Horton

This was transcribed just as Oscar wrote it except where I took the liberty in italics to identify where certain locations are today. There will be those who read this that would not recognize some of the places that he referred to.

GMC



Hunters Creek Dam