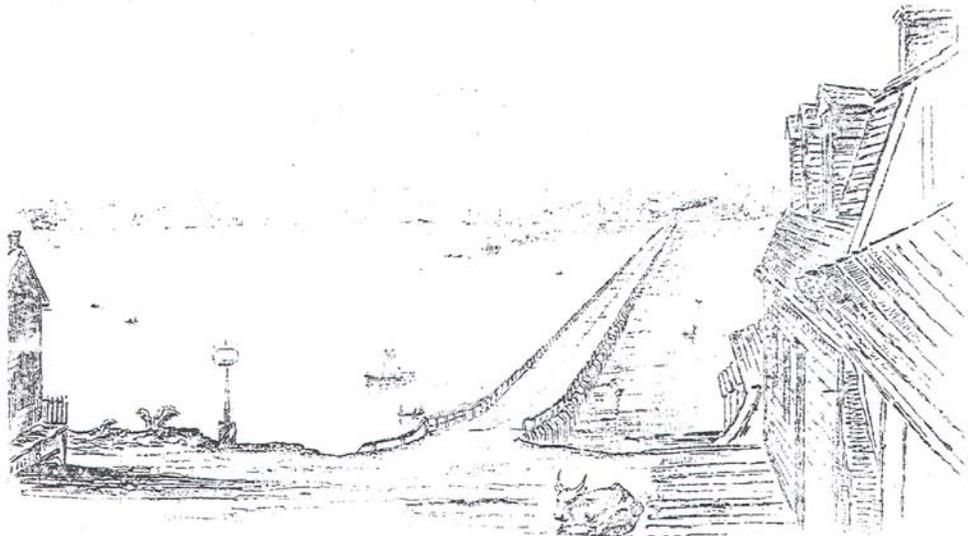


# SENECA COUNTY HISTORY

Vol. 1 No. 3

March 1985



CAYUGA LAKE BRIDGE  
From an etching by Basil Hall 1829

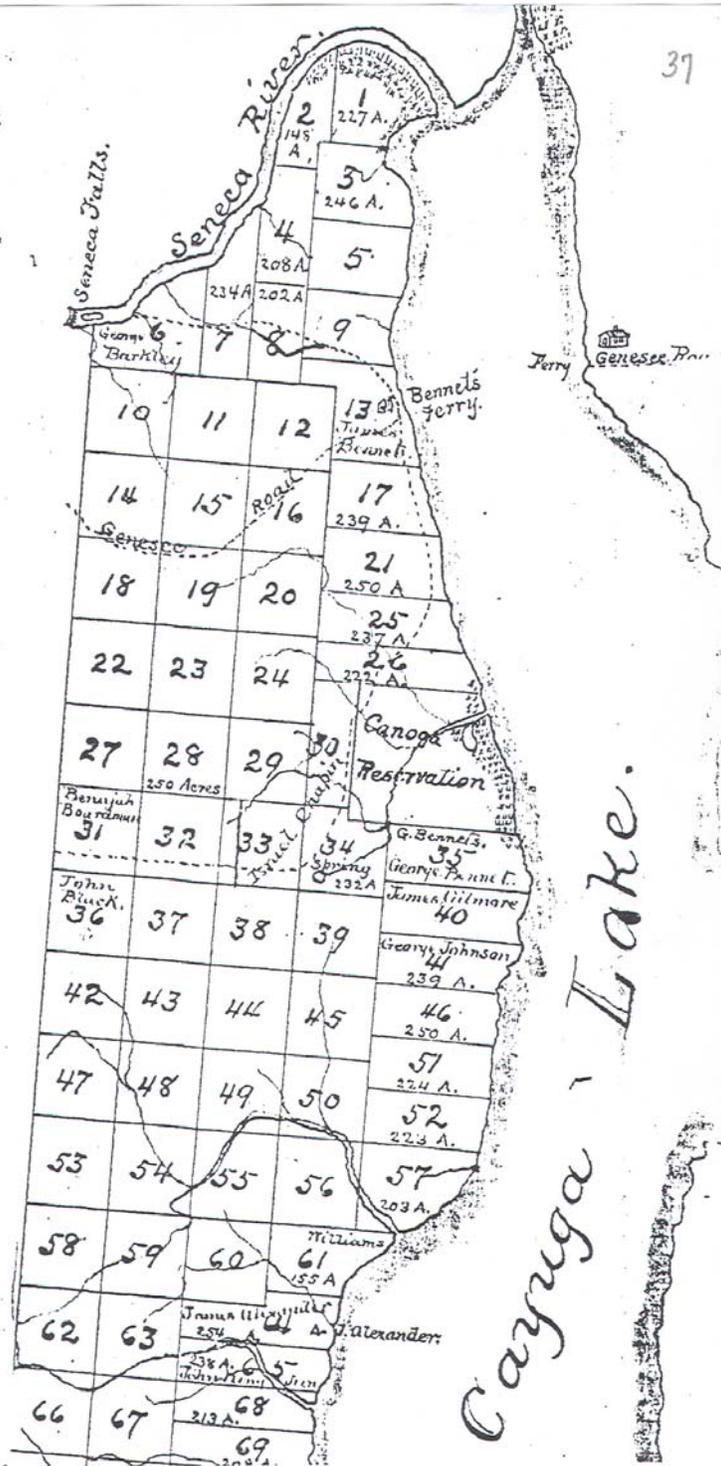
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Map of the late Cayuga Reservation on the west side of Cayuga Lake, conveyed into lots, agreeable to an Act of the Legislature passed the 9th of April, 1795, by the direction of Simeon DeWitt, Surveyor General.

Names of persons entitled to Pre-emption are written in their respective lots.

Dated - 1795

Total number of lots in reservation - 84



BRIDGEPORT  
AND  
THE CAYUGA BRIDGE

"It is not too exaggerated to say that the worst lands in the western country are nearly equal to the best in the Atlantic parts of the state." This was the opinion of no less a personage than DeWitt Clinton in 1810 after he had traveled through this area as a member of the commission to study the possibility of constructing a canal across the central part of the state.

This enthusiasm must have been uttered many times previously by the farmer-soldiers who made the journey more than twenty years before that time.

When the battle was over at the Genesee River and the men were returning home, it is not too difficult to visualize some of them reaching down and scooping up a handful of soil. Putting it in their pocket or knapsack they would take it home to show to their neighbors and friends. When the land in the Military Tract and Phelps and Gorham Purchase became available it did not take long for men to pack up and participate in the western movement.

There were no roads, only Indian trails, but they pushed ahead as best they could - by the hundreds. Those with some means were able to travel through the waterways to reach their final destination. Others came by wagon and on foot.

The vast Military Tract had been set aside specially for the soldiers but speculation and fraud became so prevalent that, because of the legal confusion, few were able to settle on these lands, even those who could rightly claim a share.

Clear titles were easier to obtain in the Phelps and Gorham Purchase, west of Seneca Lake and so by 1789, Ontario

County had been organized. The population in 1790 listed 1,075 persons in the county. Its area was huge. All that land west of Seneca Lake to the western border of the state, north to Lake Ontario, south to the Pennsylvania border.

Two men from Pennsylvania came as early as 1788: John Harris and his brother-in-law, James Bennett. They were given the right to settle by the Cayuga Indians. Harris located on Lot 57 in the East Cayuga Reservation and Bennett on Lot 13 on the west side of the lake. Harris built a cabin on his land which also served as an inn.

When the pioneers reached the western bank of the lake they had three choices for continuing on their journey. Three rudimentary paths had been established: one went south about two miles through the Canoga Reservation and then veered west along what is today Leader Road. The second, which later became the Genesee Road, went south for a short distance and turned west at about the present location of the County House Road. The third path went in a north-west direction to the portage established by Job Smith and later operated by Lawrence Van Cleef.

These early travelers coming from New England and Eastern New York found the going, tough but manageable until they reached the eastern shore of Cayuga Lake. Here they found they had four choices: cross by the Harris-Bennett ferry; work their way across the swamp which stretched for many miles north of the lake, or journey north or south to the ends of the lake or swamp.

Those were their only choices for about ten years. By 1795, a number of far-sighted men had





settled in the region and they were aware of the benefits if a bridge were built across the lake. The men were: Joseph Annin and John Harris of the present Cayuga County; Charles Williamson and Thomas Morris whose interest lay in Ontario County and Wilhelmus Mynderse.

They persuaded the Manhattan Company of New York City to invest in the proposal and on March 28, 1797, the State Legislature passed an act incorporating The Cayuga Bridge Company with the above named men as incorporators. They acquired Lot 5 in the West Reservation and land in East Cayuga. Work on the bridge did not begin until May 1799 and it was completed in September 1800. It cost \$150,000, a major sum for that time.

Historic records note that the bridge was built on mud sills. It was a mile and eight rods in length and wide enough for three wagons to pass at one time. The designer of the bridge was Comfort Tyler of Cayuga; Israel Smith was in charge of construction and Thomas Gray of Romulus was the principal builder.

Over 10,000 three-inch oak planks were used for the roadway of the bridge. Also needed were cross braces, stringers, railings and the piles upon which the bridge was built. Except for a brief supposition that the lumber for the bridge might have come from the saw mill belonging to the Jemima Wilkenson settlement in the present Yates County, there is no indication where the lumber or where the workers came from to build the bridge.

Samuel Bear had established a saw mill at Scouyas in 1793; Silas Halsey, in Ovid, in 1796 and Wilhelmus Mynderse in 1795. Certainly several others must have been in operation

in Cayuga County by that time. As for workers, it is doubtful that the early residents would have turned down the opportunity to get some "hard cash" for doing the same work they had been doing on their farms, cutting down trees. The emigrants also continued to come.

Cayuga County was set off from Onondaga in 1799. In 1800 its population was 15,907 and this included those living in the present Seneca and parts of Wayne, Tompkins and Schuyler Counties. By 1800, Ontario had 15,218 persons.

Winter ice and spring thaw played havoc with the bridge and by 1808 it was no longer safe to use. A second bridge was built two miles north of the original one but the state ordered the bridge to be located at the same site. According to historical records, two bridges were in use for a time. The last bridge was built in 1833 and abandoned in 1857.

One of the best ways of learning about a particular early location or site is through contemporary writing of the time. Dr. Clayton Mau, professor of history at Colosse, illustrated this regarding Cayuga Bridge in the writings of three early travelers through this area, in his book, "The Development of Central and Western New York."

In 1804, Timothy Dwight, President of Yale College, journeyed across New York State. He wrote in part, "We dined at Cayuga Bridge, where there is a hamlet consisting of three very good and eight or ten indifferent houses. The bridge over the lake, considering the recency of the settlements, may be justly styled a stupendous erection; and is probably the longest work of the kind in the United States. The planking being no less than a mile in length. It is built on wooden trestles,

in the plainest and most ordinary manner and exhibits nothing to strike the eye, except its length. The toll is a quarter of a dollar for man and horse, the highest I believe in the United States."

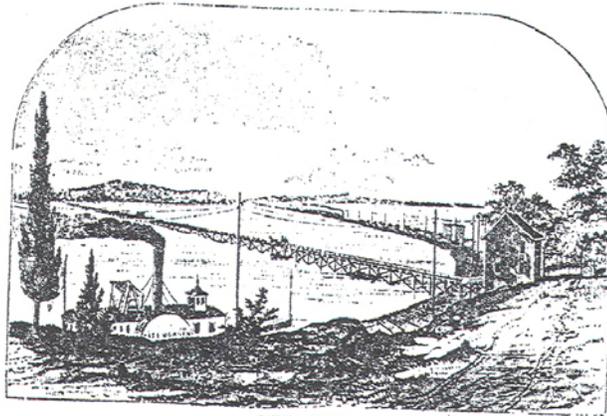
Several years after the second bridge had been built, John Duncan, a British traveler, crossed New York State by stage on the Genesee Road. He made his journey in May, 1818. He wrote, "About five in the afternoon we reached the Cayuga lake, which is here nearly a mile in width, and is crossed by a wooden bridge supported upon piles. The wheels of our chariot rolled along the level platform with a smoothness to which we had long been strangers. So luxuriant seemed the contrast, that on getting to the farther end, some of the passengers proposed that we should turn the horses and enjoy it a second time."

Compare this description with one made in 1830 by John Fowler, another British traveler. "Leaving Auburn, we next came to Cayuga, a small village standing on the eastern side and near the extremity

of the lake of that name, and over which we passed by a wooden bridge, one mile and eight rods in length --- a most barbarous structure, built upon piles and conveying the idea, if not the reality, of great insecurity. The planks or logs, upon which you pass, uncovered with gravel, soil or other material, are of all shapes and sizes, heedlessly laid across from side to side, without nails or any kind of fastening whatever.

"In many instances I observed them scarcely resting upon the supports on each side, and the waters of the lake everywhere visible below. As they acted upon the weight and motion of the coach and horse, they were perpetually jolting up and down, so that it was a matter of astonishment to me how the animals could pass over at the rate they did, a good brisk trot, without getting their feet between them. The accompanying noise and clatter, too, was anything but agreeable."

During a recent inventory of early county records a document was found which bears out the



CAYUGA BRIDGE.

fact that there were two bridges in use at one time

It is an indictment against the Cayuga Bridge Co. issued by the county. It stated in part, "The president and directors of the Cayuga Bridge Co. did on the first day of June in the year of one thousand eight hundred and nineteen in the town of Junius, cause the north bridge made by said company to be so negligently and improvidently made and kept in repair that the good citizens of this state could not go and return, pass and repass across the said bridge without great danger and inconvenience and did unlawfully and improperly put a gate upon the bridge thereby subjecting all the good citizens of this state to great delay and expense and to the great damage and common nuisance of all persons passing across the bridge.

Twenty-one jurors were called to serve including Jacob L. Larzelere and Henry Moses who lived at Bridgeport.

#### BRIDGEPORT

On Nov. 1, 1796, Joseph Annin, Luther Trowbridge and Wilhelmus Mynderse bought of Simeon De Witt, the surveyor-general 250 acres in Lot 5, of the reservation for \$1,260, giving a bond for \$1,255. The tract was divided into about 70 lots. A public square was set apart next to the lake. From the end of the bridge, west through the square was named State St. Water St. ran to the north along the bank of the lake and Washington St. ran north and south beyond the square

Some of the Indians remained on the reservation for many years. They lived somewhat north of Bridgeport, in the present area of Demont's Bridge. They hunted, fished and made baskets. Many of the children used these baskets to take their lunch to school.

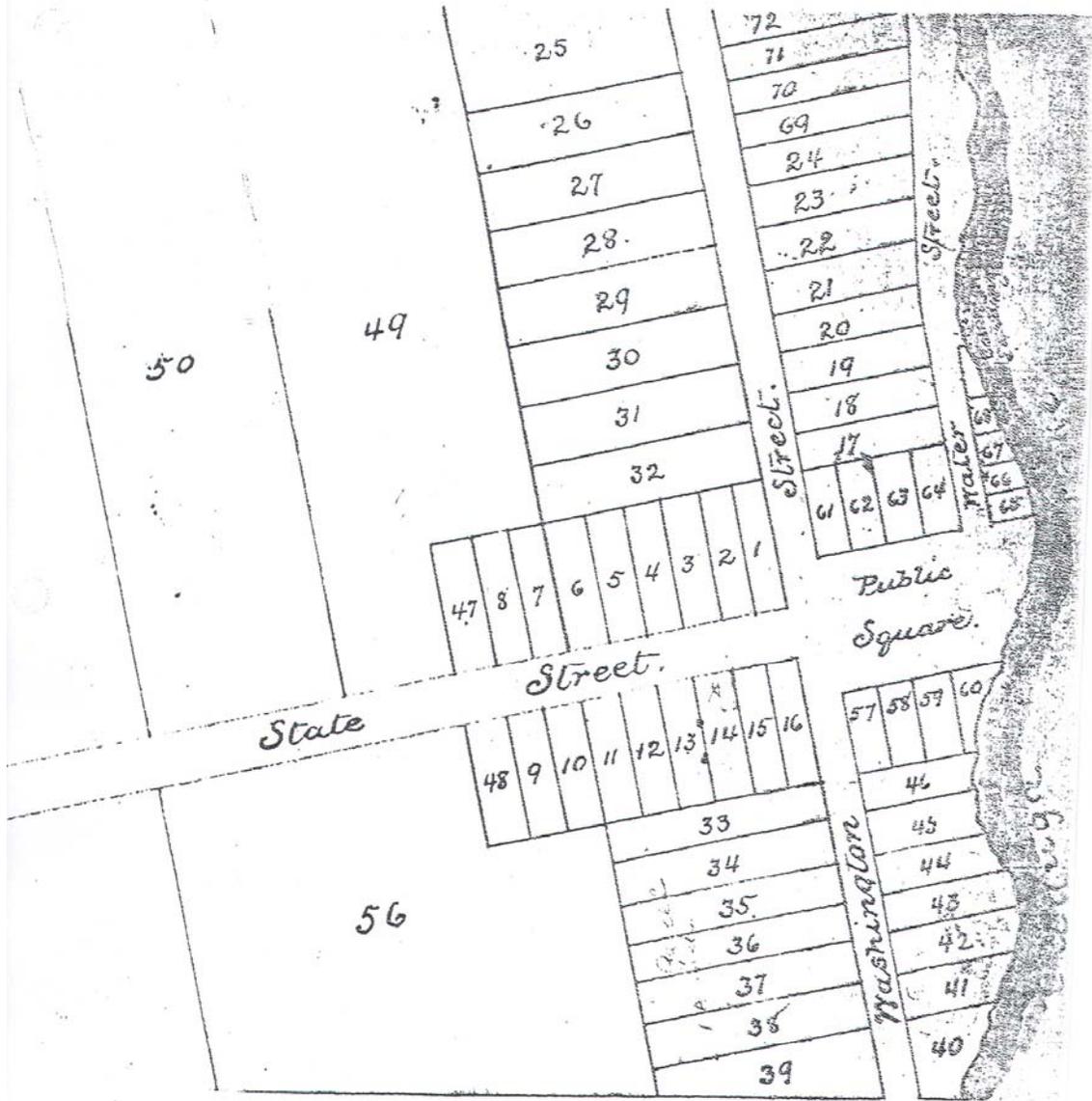
After the bridge was completed and until the canal was opened, Bridgeport was a very busy place. Four-horse stage coaches and six-horse mail coaches ran night and day. It had been estimated that between 50 and 100 coaches passed through every 24 hours. This estimate did not include the farm wagons, teams of oxen and people on foot.

The Schuyler Tavern had a long open shed and large barns for keeping relay horses. It was a place of great activity and wagon loads of merchandise passed through every day. When the Erie Canal was completed in 1825, the wagon loads of merchandise no longer came through but the stage coaches continued until the packet boats came into vogue. Mail coaches continued for a longer period. The boats were no competition for the fast running horses. It was the railroad which put an end to the bridge travel. Also by that time Free Bridge had been built through the Montezuma Swamp.

Even after the coaches had all but disappeared there were still great droves of cattle, sheep and hogs; sometimes horses being moved to the eastern markets. The livestock could not be shipped by boat and it wasn't until about the 1850's that the railroad introduced cattle cars.

Sometimes the cattle lines were nearly a mile in length and filled the road from fence to fence. Farmers along the way would sell excess hay and corn to the drovers.





Map of West Cayuga (BRIDGEPORT), laid out on Lot 5, west side of Cayuga Lake, in the Cayuga Reservation. Filed in the Clerk's office of the County of Cayuga, 11/9/1801. Samuel Ledyard, deputy clerk.

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The drovers had to pay a toll for each animal that crossed the bridge and another toll along the turnpike. This cut down on the margin of profit they would receive at the market. In the winter of 1846-47, some drovers, wanting to avoid paying the toll on the bridge for the cattle, took their animals out on the ice. The weight of the animals broke the ice and about 50 cows drowned.

Jacob L. Larzelere was one of the first permanent settlers at Bridgeport. He was appointed one of the surveyors of the Military Tract and the Indian Reservation shortly after the treaty was signed with the Cayuga Indians. He received 97 acres in Sterling and his name appears in The Ballotting Book. He settled instead at Bridgeport. He served for two terms as a representative for Seneca County in the State legislature; was sheriff for one term and associate justice for a number of years. He died Dec. 1, 1843 at 70 and is buried at the Bridgeport Cemetery. Some of his descendants still live in that area. He ran a tavern on the north side of State St. He was also supervisor of Junius for a number of years.

Daniel Sayre moved to Bridgeport in 1806 and built a house on the opposite side of State St. He was supervisor of Junius from 1805 until 1807. He owned several parcels of land, purchasing his first in 1796. He died in 1813 and his wife later married Henry Towar, a well-known business man of Phelps.

Henry Moses who was born at Valley Forge, Pa. in 1784, was a blacksmith. He first located

nearer Seneca Falls in a building he rented from Wilhelmus Mynderse. He soon moved to Bridgeport where he opened a blacksmith shop and later a tavern in the house built by Daniel Sayre. He converted his dwelling into a tavern because of the demand with so many travelers on the road. His inn was also very popular with the local residents and many political discussions were held on his front porch.

Moses served one term as sheriff but his ambitions were not political and he preferred the farm life. He purchased land on Lot 9 in the reservation and when he closed his tavern in 1833 because of the lack of travelers, he moved to his farm.

Another well-known tavern keeper of the day was Christopher Baldy. His place was on the north side of the square near Water St. and he was a very popular man. He was a veteran of the Revolutionary War. He fell upon hard times and in 1820 was declared an insolvent debtor. Little documentation has been preserved of his later years although he is buried at Bridgeport.

Asa Sprague who later became the president of a railroad company lived at Bridgeport for a time. Another well known man who resided there for a time was Garry V. Sackett who had a law office there before he moved into the village of Seneca Falls.

Elijah Boardman, who enlisted in 1777 as a ensign in Capt. Richard Hewitt's Company in a Connecticut regiment, came with his family and his son Deming married Polly Crane, daughter of Stephen, in 1798.

On the south side of the public

square was a long white building which was sometimes used as a town hall. John Hungerford had a shoe shop in this building. During its hey-day, Bridgeport had four stores and many shops.

One of the first schools was kept by Miss Helen Pratt, daughter of Russell who had a school in her home. Another early teacher was Mrs. Elizabeth Watling, a widowed sister of Robert Gott, an early settler. She had come from Lincolnshire, England in the 1830's, with five children. She first taught in a private school and later at the district school. In 1850 she went with two of her daughters to California by way of the Panama Isthmus.

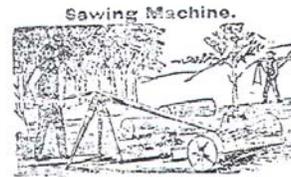
In 1821, Wilhelmus Mynderse, who still owned many of the lots gave the trustees of the district a deed to build a school house in the northwest corner of the cemetery. In 1852 another lot was purchased by the trustees: Daniel Marsh, Marvin Read and Elam Beach. At that time there were over 80 pupils in the school.

Daniel Marsh was the last toll keeper of the Cayuga Bridge. The man who dug the graves in the cemetery for many years was William Travis. Bridgeport even had its resident Negro. Tim Hazard lived in a shack next to the lake and was a well-liked town character. Other names that appear in early deeds are: Robert Oliver, Thomas McCurdy, Michael Delaney and Zephaniah Lewis.

Other tavern owners were: Ward Monroe who had a tavern on the south corner of State and Washington St. One on the opposite corner was owned first by Asa Starkweather and later by Arent Schuyler. The Schuyler Tavern was the last to close: others had been converted into private homes or tenements. They disappeared through fire or neglect. To handle the flow of travelers there were at least six inns at Bridgeport and seven more between the lake and the present site of Restvale Cemetery. One was named Snake Hill Tavern.

Bridgeport was a thriving place for about thirty years, continued to exist for another 25 and then slowly dwindle away to oblivion. The recorded existence of the Cayuga Bridge and Bridgeport was recorded in bits and pieces. If one could graphically recall one particular period of its events, the most interesting would probably be that time when the thousands of troops passed through Bridgeport and crossed the bridge on their way and returning from the Niagara Frontier. The Geneva newspapers of 1812 to 1815 tell of the many companies that passed through Geneva on their way to the front.

There are a few documents which tell of an army field hospital being established at BRIDGEPORT for the wounded and ill. Many a tale has been told of cannons falling off the bridge into the waters of the lake. Up to now, none have been found.



#### COMPARABLE VALUES OF MAN AND BEAST

On Jan. 6, 1832, local newspapers carried the following ad: John Shay of Fayette offered 6 cents reward for runaway indentured girl named Catherine Sherman

On Nov. 23, 1832, the same paper announced that Jeremaih Stuck offered \$5 for strayed steer.

## THERE CAN BE HAPPY ENDINGS

In about 1880 a young lady came from her native Denmark to live and work in the United States. Her name was Ludetta Moller. She was employed for a time as a domestic in the eastern part of New York State but when she became mentally ill she was sent to the Utica Asylum.

Some time later she was transferred to Willard State Hospital and there she remained, seemingly content in her dream world. Her illusions were happy ones, she imagined she was a wealthy aristocrat and lived on a great estate. There was no harm in such dreams and so she continued to live her fantasy.

One day she gave the attendants a letter she had written which she said she wanted sent to her brother in Denmark. It was written in Danish and no one at the hospital could read it but she had the address and so the letter was sent.

When her brother Just Moller received the letter he was delighted to learn of her good fortune. She told him of her great wealth and her beautiful home and invited him and his family to come to America and live with her.

How could he resist such a kind offer? Moller sold what belongings he had and used the money to bring his wife and five children to live with his sister in the United States.

They arrived in Willard only to find that Ludetta was definitely not wealthy. She had nothing of worldly goods and was a patient in a hospital.

What did they do? They made the best of the situation. Mr. Moller was a shoemaker. He found work and the family settled in Willard and became respected members of the community.

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Two of the children died young but son Hoter remained in Willard; son Henry became a well-known caterer in Ithaca, and daughter Cecelia married George Crocker and moved to Bath.

They are all gone now. Some are buried in Union Cemetery in Ovid. Lodema remained at the hospital and died there in November 1897. During her remaining years her real world must have been as good as her imaginary one, knowing that her family was near.

Remembrance



HUGH DOBBIN

There were many men who were involved in the early development of what is now Seneca County. They came from Eastern New York State, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New England and other areas, and left their mark.

Many had a first hand view of the area when they were a soldier in the Sullivan and Clinton regiments of the Revolutionary War. Others heard about it through friends and relatives who returned from the battle.

These men are still remembered through family lines which continue to the present day: through their

deeds as early officials and residents of the county. Hugh W. Dobbin was one of these adventuresome men who blazed a trail in the western wilderness. A literate man, Dobbin left a journal which has been preserved to the present time. Through his journal we are made aware of what it was like to open up a new frontier.

In Book -A. page 169, of the Seneca County Deeds there was one recorded, Sept. 5, 1792, whereby Richard Allison and wife Amy of Ulster Co. sold one-third of Lot 92, in Junius to Hugh W. Dobbin, of the same place, for 60 pounds. In 1800 a second deed was recorded of the sale, possibly to verify the transaction. Apparently Dobbin bought his land sight-unseen for, according to his journal, he went there for the first time in 1797.

His father, also named Hugh, had been a soldier in the Revolutionary War. After his father's death his mother had remarried. By about 1795 his stepfather had also died.

He recalled, "I returned to my sisters and brought my mother home with me to Pond Eddy where she resided with me a part of the time till the fall of 1796."

His mother found it necessary to go to Elizabeth, N.J. to establish her dower rights and so Dobbin let her borrow one of his horses to make the trip. He had planned to leave that spring with his family, for their new home but being without a team to pull the wagon, and having no funds he had to abandon the plan for a time.

He noted in his journal, "Seeing I could not set out with my family to my farm on the lot at the foot Seneca Lake until fall, I provided some articles I could peddle on the way and set out on horseback for Geneva.:

He knew he would find friends when he arrived for his wife's parents were already living in Phelps. His sister, Betsy had married a Mr. Hill and she was also in Phelps. She had been there for about a year.

He wrote, "I left Milford on the 5th of July, 1797. I found my way through the beach woods to Geneva and Phelpsstown where I found employment through harvesting and haying for two months and had my home with my friends in Phelps. I cleared the ground and raised a log cabin on the lot at the foot of Seneca Lake."

Lot 92 in Junius is that area which is known as the Serven Plot, and includes the drive-in theater, the 96A Arterial and extends to Seneca Lake State Park.

He returned to his family intending to return with them to Geneva. He found, "My mother had returned from New Jersey but had the misfortune to lose the horse I had furnished her to take her there. She had purchased another old horse imposed upon her for more than he was worth."

The family made preparations to start on their journey to their new home in the wilderness. Dobbin purchased a wagon on credit and a Mr. Van Aukin let him have the use of a yoke of oxen which he was to deliver to Van Aukin's brother who lived in Phelps.

He said, "I put a cover over my wagon and loaded in it such household furniture, beds and bedding as we must have with us. It left something for the want of room in the wagon having with me, my wife, mother, sister Jane and four children, the youngest about eight or nine months old. I trailed a cow to the wagon and it soon followed with no trouble."

They set out from Milford on Nov. 8, 1797. He continued, "Good weather for two or three days and then we came into rain, hail and snowstorms. We reached the Great Bend of the Susquehanna on the 17th day of November. Snow was six inches deep and still snowing.

"We made the best of our way to Owego, through to the head of Cayuga Lake. It was a severe trial for a man alone but it was harder to go through the woods for a man with his family. I shall never forget the way my kind and loving wife did try to keep our courage up. She said, keep good courage, we are on the way to the promised land. Let us go on rejoicing. We will not return to be in bondage again. We are going through the wilderness. Let us sing and be joyful."

The family arrived in Geneva 23 days after they had left Milford. They stayed with friends in Phelps until spring and then moved into their log cabin on the edge of Seneca Lake.

As the Dobbin family settled in to make a home for themselves, he wrote, "Then came the time for clearing and preparing the garden. I attended to the clearing of the timber and brushwood and planting my land for cultivation. I sold about 70 acres of my land for five and six dollars per acre which enabled me to build a frame house and barn."

According to deeds recorded at the courthouse, Hugh W. Dobbin and wife Margaret, sold 36 acres to Jonathan Hall for \$162 in 1802 and another 30 acres in 1806 to William Pitt Duv for \$175.

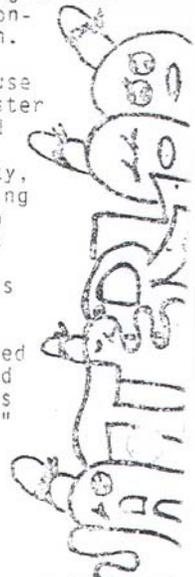
Dobbin commented in his journal, "It was to me some of the pleasantest and happiest days of my life. I had a kind and loving companion that devoted herself to the care and comfort of her husband when he came

in weary and tired from his daily labour and taking care of the nursery and attending to the well being of her children. She was much respected by our neighbors and acquaintances. As for myself I claim nothing more than to be in common with my neighbors, respected and treated as a fellow citizen and friend."

The children attended school in Geneva because there was no teacher in the near vicinity. The family attended church meetings in Geneva and when the Rev. Jedediah Chapman settled there, the Presbyterian meeting house was started.

The Rev. Jedediah Chapman was the first "preacher" in this area and he is credited with being the organizer of many of the early churches in Seneca, Ontario and adjoining counties. Although he is often mentioned in the early histories of the region, little has been said about him as an individual. In Hugh Dobbin's journal one can get an insight of his personality, one that was well suited to the homespun life of the people.

He wrote, "We attended meetings in Geneva to the preaching of the endless torment of the non-elect by the Rev. Chapman. I was taxed and paid my share of building the house and paying the Rev. Minister for informing us that God out of his mere good pleasure from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life and the non-elect to suffer endless punishment for their own sinning against God's Commandments in the Garden of Eden. Eating of the forbidden fruit which sin is entailed upon the whole of Adam and Eve's posterity to endless misery, except the elect."



A few years after establishing his home on Seneca Lake he experienced a number of hardships: the cow they had brought from Milford, died, and he had to sell his house to get money to replace her. Before he left Milford he had given a man money to close the sale of his property there and the man had kept the money for his own use. He had to return to Milford to settle the matter. He made the trip of 250 miles on foot with just two dollars in his pockets and finally got the matter settled.

In 1802 he was appointed overseer of the roads for the Town of Washington. When Junius was formed in 1803 he became one of the first assessors and overseer of the roads. For a number of years he was commissioner of highways, overseer of the poor and commissioner of the gospel and school lots. In 1815 he was elected supervisor of Junius. He served as representative to the State Legislature for Seneca County and was justice of the peace for a number of years.

In 1810 he was appointed deputy marshall to take the census of Seneca County. At that time Seneca County extended south to the southern boundary line of Ulysses and Hector which includes the present site of the City of Ithaca, north to the shores of Lake Ontario. The 1810 census which is still available on microfilm was obviously written by one person. No other name but Hugh Dobbin's appears on the census as enumerator. The handwriting on the census is the same throughout the pages and it must be surmised that he alone compiled that census.

And if one may emphasize on the vitality of this early pioneer, he repeated that chore in 1820. Seneca County was somewhat smaller by that time, Ulysses and Hector had been placed in Tompkins County but Seneca still extended north to



Lake Ontario. In 1810, the population of the county was 16,609, in 1820 despite the removal of the two townships, the population had increased to 23,413.

Dobbin was a brave soldier in the War of 1812 and rose to the rank of Brigadier General. He said, "I was ordered into the service of the United States on the Niagara frontier in 1812. In 1813 I was again ordered into service under General McClure. I received my discharge from General McClure at Fort George and arrived at my home in Junius on the 18th December, 1813. I found my wife confined to bed, sick and my youngest son Henry, also confined with a bad swelling in the thigh and body."

This must have been an especially difficult time for Dobbin. His country needed him but he strongly felt the need to remain with his family. His journal was obviously written in later years but the events of those times remained strong in his memory.

He wrote, "Major General Hall of Bloomfield directed an order to me dated, the 8th of January, 1814, calling on me to take the command of a new detached regiment of militia, to serve three months at and near Buffalo, to rendezvous at Batavia. I rode to Batavia and informed him of the situation of my family and observed that I had served two campaigns and there were militia officers willing to serve in my place.

"The General said he sent the order to me for the reason that I had been in service and was so well acquainted with my duty that I was worth more than half a

dozen officers that had not seen service, to discipline the raw militia. He could not excuse me but would grant me furlough if it became necessary."

After the troops were organized he was given leave to return home and arrange his family affairs. He consulted with his wife's physician, a Dr. Goodwin, and with his wife. She said, "I feel some better than I did in the fall but I do not expect to get well. I will not let the world affairs trouble me now. I do not suffer for the want of anything that will be of service to me or to comfort me but I know I must die and when I am in my grave, what will become of my children. You will either break up keeping house or you will get married again to some woman to take my place. I pray that you will find a mother for my children."

He spoke again to the physician who did not think his wife was in any immediate danger and she encouraged him to serve out the required three months and maybe then they would allow him to remain with her and the children.

He returned to camp at Buffalo but less than two weeks later he received word that his wife was dangerously ill. He set out immediately for his home and when he reached it and entered her room, "I saw that death was at work upon her. She told me not to weep and that, not able to say anything else, she shoved her hand into my hand as if to bid farewell. When without a struggle she fell asleep to wake no more in this world."

Margaret Dobbin died on March 1, 1814. Henry, Dobbin's son died in March 1816. He had returned to service after his wife's death and was discharged in April.

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He wrote, "At this time General Peter B. Porter put into my hands a general order of Governor Tompkins to raise a corps of volunteers to serve six months under General Porter. He requested me to engage in raising a regiment and to have the command. I at first declined on account of my sick family and my own feeble health, but General Porter so earnestly insisted and pressed me to recruit volunteers in Seneca County. He told me I was well acquainted and stood well in that county in support of the war."

He was successful. About 50 men from Seneca County enrolled under Capt. William Hooper and Lieut. Thomas W. Roosevelt of Junius on June 24, 1814.

General Porter had gone to Batavia so Dobbin went there to ask permission to return to his family. Arriving there he found that Porter had gone to Buffalo and had left orders for Dobbin and Lt. Col. Philetus Swift to bring the volunteers. At Buffalo he learned that Porter had crossed into Canada and had joined the army at Chipawa. They were to follow.

He wrote, "We obeyed the order. I was too late now to ask time of absence." In this section of his journal, Dobbin refers to himself in the third person. Perhaps because of a touch of humility for he noted, "Lt Col. Swift was ordered across to Lewiston to command militia on the American side of the river and Lt. Col. Hugh W. Dobbin was placed in command of the regiment under the rank of company commander and this placed Col. Dobbin next to General Porter in command of the Brigade of Volunteers."

"He was commissioned Brigadier General in command of the 34th Brigade of Infantry, New York Militia, the 2nd of May, 1816. Also a commission giving him that rank in consequence of his having commanded the brave volunteers that so nobly met and sustained themselves against the savage enemy of their Country. Then Gen. Hugh W. Dobbin stands above reproach or impeachment in the Civil and Military conduct of his life."

The war was finally over and he was free to return to his family and his home. He went back to his farm on Seneca Lake and found he now had other problems to contend with. In 1816, the newly formed Seneca Lock Navigation Company had erected mill dams in the Seneca Outlet at Waterloo and at the foot of Seneca Lake. This was done to raise the surface of the lake some five or six feet above its natural level at low-water mark to supply the grist and saw mills with a sufficient head of water to turn their wheels at all seasons of the year.

This caused nearly 30 acres of Dobbin's low meadow ground to be flooded and damaged. He could no longer mow the grass. Dobbin complained to the lock navigation company and asked damages. They refused saying that eventually the lake would revert to its natural level. He took the counsel of a lawyer and got a written opinion.

In the meantime the company sold its corporate right to the State Dobbin bemoaned, "I petitioned the Legislature. I went to Albany, paid a lawyer 50 dollars to have my claim investigated and my expenses were 50 dollars more. During the winter I succeeded in getting a law passed authorizing the canal commissioners to reduce the waters of Seneca Lake to its natural level. But Doctor Watkins at the head of

the lake was not satisfied with the natural level. He must have more and suffered himself to be taxed for all the damages for letting down the lake below natural level to drain his lands.

"They lowered the dam at Waterloo some 2 1/2 feet and called it natural level. I contended that the dam must be taken out to give a natural level but I have these rich mill owners and a large portion of the people against me. It went to the canal appraisers. They set my claim of damages against the great advantages of the mills and manufacturers. So much I got for my time, labour and expenses from 1816 to 1825, and the dam is still running more than three feet above the natural water level of the lake.

"I could not stand alone in a lawsuit against all the rich mill owners at Waterloo and owners of the wharfs and docks at Geneva. But at the same time there is a just claim of more than \$12,000 I have on the State of New York or otherwise I should be taxed on the estate of Elisha Williams at Waterloo who was the great lawyer and the great man I had to contend with. He built up Waterloo and washed me in the dust and made me poor. Big fish eats the little fish."

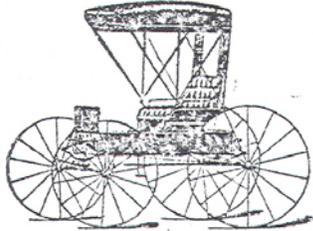
In December 1817 Dobbin married again. His second wife was the widow of Col. Jasper Sears of West Bloomfield whom he met through General Porter. The marriage did not succeed. Mrs. Sears had three sons and two daughters. Dobbin had two married sons and six daughters.

When they married, the second Mrs. Dobbin came to live in Junius. She was not happy there and often returned to West

Dobbin's

Bloomfield for visits and finally refused to return to Junius. She tried to persuade Mr. Dobbin to move to her home but he refused to leave his children. They remained separated but friendly until her death in November 1828.

In 1834 he was again elected justice of the peace for the Town of Waterloo. He served for two years then resigned, sold his property on the lake and moved to Geneva. The Dobbin family later bought land on Lot 89 in Waterloo. The Dobbin homestead is still standing at the corner of Serven and Packwood Roads. He and his family are buried in the cemetery which adjoins the property. He died on Sept. 20, 1855 at 88.



#### TRAGEDY AT SENECA FALLS

Sometime ago the county historian's office received a request for information relating to a William E. McClure who had died in Seneca Falls in 1861. The correspondent indicated there was no understandable reason for McClure to have died here since no member of the family had ever lived in New York State.

It appeared to be a simple matter of checking newspaper records to verify the death. Finding the notice was easy but the facts of the event was not simple. With the help of the old newspaper files and recently found county records it was possible to reconstruct a case of

51 31  
assault, murder and escape still incomplete 124 years after it occurred.

Shortly after the start of the Civil War, it became the responsibility of the towns of this area to guarantee the enlistment of men to serve in the regiments. Town officials offered bounties to men who would sign up for service. Each town held rallies and eminent politicians or other influential men would give patriotic speeches to entice the men. Officers of companies already formed would invite personable younger officers to speak to the men and recruit them into service.

William E. McClure was such a young officer. He belonged to an Ohio regiment and had been invited to Seneca Falls to act as recruiter.

He lived at the hotel and shortly after his arrival, on Oct. 23, 1861, he and another young man named Daniel Brock, possibly also a recruiter, took the evening off to escort two young ladies to a concert.

As they walked down the street to the concert hall they were waylaid by four young men and were viciously attacked. The attack was extremely violent and shortly hereafter, McClure died of his injuries.

Brock survived the assault and was able to identify Thomas Anderson, Thomas Macken, James Stout and William Costello as the assaultants. Three witnesses were also subpoenaed, including Horace Silsby who had seen the attack.

Among the old papers in the county vault are a number of documents relating to this affair. The original town charges made by the constable and coroners are still in existence.

The men were arrested by Constables Lorin Demund and Archibald Campbell on charges of murder of William E. McClure and assault with intent to kill of Daniel Brock. The justice who issued the warrant was Francis W. Henry.

The principal coroner was William A. Swaby. The inquest, which took five days, was held at the house of C.C. Stafford. According to his paper he was to receive \$6 a day for five days for the use of his house. The post mortem examination was done by Drs. Swaby, James Bellows and George W. Davis. Josiah T. Miller was district attorney.

The charge against Macken was dismissed prior to the time the case was brought into court. Stout, Costello and Anderson were indicted for the crime on Feb. 20, 1862. The charges against Stout and Costello were dismissed at that time but Anderson was held for the murder of McClure.

Sometime before the case could come to trial, Anderson escaped from the Ovid jail. Another town charge was presented by Lorin Demund on March 4, 1863. The case: The People against Thomas Anderson for murder. The charge: for traveling on requisition from Governor Seymour and bench warrant to Elmira, 73 miles; to Harrisburg, Penn. 180 miles; to Pittsburg, 250 miles; hence to Lyons Junction, 83 miles; to Ravenna, 25 miles; to Meadville, 84 miles. To Titusville 67 miles, thence to The Wells, 18 miles; to Correy, 30 miles; to Erie, 37 miles to Buffalo, 88 miles; to Rochester, 68 miles; to Seneca Falls, 62 miles then to Ovid 32 miles at 6 cents a mile, total \$65.82.

Presumably he caught up with Anderson at Meadville for there he paid \$1 for a warrant by direction of Governor Curtin. He also paid an officer \$5 for assistance and a toll of 12 cents. No charge was included for lodging or meals although 25 cents was listed to feed his horse at Ovid.

Demund then probably went home to a well deserved rest but it is not the end of the story. Somehow Anderson managed to escape from jail a second time.

Many years later, Henry Stowell, editor of the Seneca Falls Reveille recalled the affair and noted that Anderson had never been apprehended.

William E. McClure is buried in the soldier's plot in Restvale Cemetery in Seneca Falls. His grave is marked with a simple Civil War marker for a young soldier who died in service for his country.



#### REMEMBER THE VALIENT

CAPT. JONATHAN PAUL FALCONER, died 11/7/1984, in Ithaca, 85. Buried Canoga. Retired from U.S. Naval Reserve Civil Engineer Corps. In active service 1916 to 1962. In WW,II was Seabee Batt. commander in Pacific. In Korean War was based in Lodon in charge of NATO Forces in the Mediterranean. Was the son-in-law of Dr. C. Anna Brown.



JOHN JOSEPH CAPACCI died 11/8/  
1984 in Albion. Born Seneca Falls.  
With the Army Corps of Engineers  
in the Korean Conflict. Later  
member of New York State Police  
for five years. 55, Buried Albion.

\*\*\*\*\*

RICHARD K. BIXBY died 11/7/1984  
at Veterans Hospital in Syracuse,  
71. Born in Fayette. With the 443rd  
Medical Collecting Co. Served in  
Europe October 1943 to December  
1945. Buried Maple Grove, Waterloo

\*\*\*\*\*

LESTER C. MILLERD, died 11/17/  
1984 in Waterloo. 71. Born Waterloo  
son of Albert and Molly Campbell  
Millerd. Was Tech/5 in Co. K. 104th  
Infantry. Received the Bronze Star  
Medal. Charter member of Waterloo  
VFW. Buried St. Marys Cemetery.

\*\*\*\*\*

ANTHONY JAMES OSSO, died 11/26/  
1984 at Sheffield, Pa. 53. formerly  
Seneca Falls. Born Wayneburg, Pa. A  
veteran of Korean War. Buried St. Col-  
umbkille Cemetery.

\*\*\*\*\*

DANIEL PRICE, died 11/17/1984,  
Waterloo. 35. He was a veteran of  
the Vietnam war in the U.S. Army.  
Buried Glenwood Cemeter, Geneva

\*\*\*\*\*

JOHN C. LAMA, died 11/29/1984,  
in Seneca Falls. Born Seneca Falls  
68, was a radio operator in the US  
Air Force. in WW,II. Buried St.  
Columbkille Cemetery.

53 59  
STANLEY LISZCA, died 12/7/1984  
at Waterloo, 75. He was a major in  
the Army Air Force. Buried  
in Westbury, N.Y.

\*\*\*\*\*

GABRIEL A. SINICROPI,  
died 12/5/1984, Seneca Falls  
58. Born in Seneca Falls,  
he was in the US Navy and  
stationed in the South  
Pacific for two years. Bur-  
ied St. Columbkille

\*\*\*\*\*

JOSEPH A. CEFARATTI, died 12/11/  
1984 in Town of Seneca Falls, 65.  
Born Auburn, veteran of WW,II.  
Buried Fort Hill Cemetery, Auburn

\*\*\*\*\*

MRS. HELEN HARDEN BABBITT, died  
12/10/1984, in Tulsa, Okla. Born  
Willard, was a US Army nurse in  
WW,II. Buried Tulsa.

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ARMENIO J. MARINO, died 12/21/  
1984 in Waterloo. Born 1919 at  
Addison, NY. Was a St. Sgt. in  
398th Fighter Sq. and served in  
India and Burma Campaign in WW,II.

\*\*\*\*\*

ERNEST J. COREY, died 12/27/  
1984 in Tyre, 72. He was born in  
Auburn He was a medical technician  
during WW,II.

\*\*\*\*\*

JOHN W. VINCENT died 1/8/1985,  
at Willard, 63. Born Ithaca, Vet-  
eran of WW,II. Was county coroner  
for 15 years. Buried Holy Cross.



LAWRENCE C. HIGGINS, died 1/11/1985 in Seneca Falls, 57. Born in Oswego, was a veteran of the U.S. Navy. Buried St. Columbkille.

\*\*\*\*\*

NICHOLAS D. MARR, died 1/12/1985 in Seneca Falls, 66. He was born in Galen and was a veteran in the U.S. Army, serving in the Pacific. He received the Bronze Star Medal. Buried St. Columbkille.

\*\*\*\*\*

DONALD E. QUINN, died 1/20/1985 at Ovid, 56. He was born in Athens, Pa. and was a veteran of the Korean War. Buried Union Cemetery, Ovid.

\*\*\*\*\*

HERBERT L. SAHLER, died 2/9/1985 at Lexington, KY. formerly Seneca Falls, 86. He was a veteran of WW, I. Buried Kentucky.

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HERBERT F. MC CUTCHEON, died 2/14/1985 in Waterloo. Born 1927 in Brooklyn he was a veteran of WW, II and the Korean War, in the U.S. Navy. Buried St. Mary's Cemetery.

\*\*\*\*\*

PATRICK T. DOWD, died 2/19/1985 at Seneca Falls, 89. He was born in Oswego and was a veteran of WW, I, serving with the U.S. Army in France. Buried Rural Cemetery, Fayette.

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THEY ALSO SERVED

JAMES M O'CONNELL, died 11/14/1984 at Romulus, 89. He was former town assessor, past chairman of the Romulus Democratic Committee and one of the oldest active firemen in New York State.

\*\*\*\*\*

WILLIAM OLP, died 12/27/1984 in Junius. Killed when a tree fell on him. Had been town justice of Junius for 49 years, 71.

\*\*\*\*\*

THE REV. LEO LYNCH, died 1/30/1985 in the Canandaigua Hospital. Born in Rochester he was ordained 12/18/1943. He was pastor of St. Patrick's Church in Seneca Falls from 1969 until 1978. He was 66. He was survived by four brothers and three sisters. Two sisters are nuns and one brother, now deceased, the Rev. Joseph Lynch, was also a priest. Buried in Holy Sepulchre Cemetery, Canandaigua.

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STARK STREET CEMETERY  
WATERLOO

HERBERT  
John died 6/12/1829, 70  
Mary, died 10/22/1856, 77

HIGLEY  
Lucy, died 11/22/1837, 87

HILES  
Michael, died 12/31/1838, 72  
Abigail, died 3/30/1847, 76

HILL  
Cornelius Jr. 1/14/1862, 61  
Sarah, 2/20/1885, 89  
Cornelius, 9/3/1852, 92  
Elizabeth, 2/28/1853, 89

HILLS  
Henry, 9/14/1827, 0-4-18  
Elizabeth, 9/20/1839, 81

HOLDEN  
Eliza Ann, 6/7/1873, 61

HOVEY  
Mary Ann, 5/11/1837, 18-1-2

HUBBELL  
Edward C. 9/16/1823, 1-3-0  
Martha A. 2/26/1828, 0-2-0

HULBERT  
Anna E. 10/5/1844, 2-3-17

HUNT  
Joseph, M.D. 8/5/1827, 63-4-0  
Matilda, 8/17/1832, 32

INGERSOL  
Charles W. 6/10/1854, 33  
Mary A. 6/28/1889, 67

INSLEE  
Jonathan, 12/2/1844, 79  
Deborah, 8/20/1840, 62  
George A. 8/21/1830, 28  
Laura, 9/6/1838, 25-4-0

JACKSON  
Ann E. S. 1/21/1883, 14

JAMESON  
Elizabeth, 8/27/1896, 88-0-15  
Lorenzo, 4/24/1881, 46  
Ida May, 9/6/1863, 3  
Two infants, no data

JEPSON  
Julius, 5/9/1905, 33

JOHNSON  
Moses, 1/23/1845, 42-5-4  
Sarah G. 5/6/1832, 22-5-18

KELLY  
Michael B. 6/5/1886, 18-6-18  
Bridget, 7/31/1872, 66-8-0  
Charles, 3/21/1845, 63  
Mary, 3/27/1854, 24-3-0  
Margaret Tumulty, 1/24/1890, 67  
Bridget, 7/16/1882, 40  
Child of Bridget, 11/20/1872,  
0-11-0. Bridget and child taken  
to St. Mary's, 5/22/1905

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KELLOGG  
Fuller, 7/28/1832, 39  
Enos, 11/7/1825, 2-1-18

KENDIG  
John T. 10/4/1820, 22  
Leah, 10/20/1820, 46  
Charles, 9/17/1828, 0-11-0  
David S. 5/8/1841, 7-0-17

KILSEY  
Homer, 9/29/1845, 0-4-0

KING  
Capt. Nathaniel, 12/21/1840, 34  
Mary Ann, 1/11/1841, 1-0-6

KIPP  
Hassle, 9/4/1823, 21-1-20  
Nancy Ann, 2/29/1832, 5-5-25  
Hassle, 3/5/1830, 1-3-4  
Nicholas, 1/21/1839, 4

KISINGER  
Mary, 10/18/1841, 33-0-9

KITTRICK  
Betsey, 1/?/1853, 48

LAMBERT  
Joseph, 8/21/1827, 25  
Elizabeth, 1/1/1849, 59

LANGDON  
George H. 10/19/1837, 28-0-1  
George A. 2/23/1862, 24  
Ashel, 9/13/1836, 0-1-7

LATIS  
Mary, 3/26/1873, 21  
John 7/15/1884, 1-6-0  
Edward, 3/16/1886, 0-1-0

LEE  
Elisha, 8/27/1829, 58  
Elizabeth, 3/24/1828, 44  
Tabitha, wf. of David,  
4/8/1820, 85  
Elisha N. 2/14/1834, 4-3-25  
Sophia E. 5/21/1837, 7  
Sarah E. 11/10/1832, 1-1-2

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