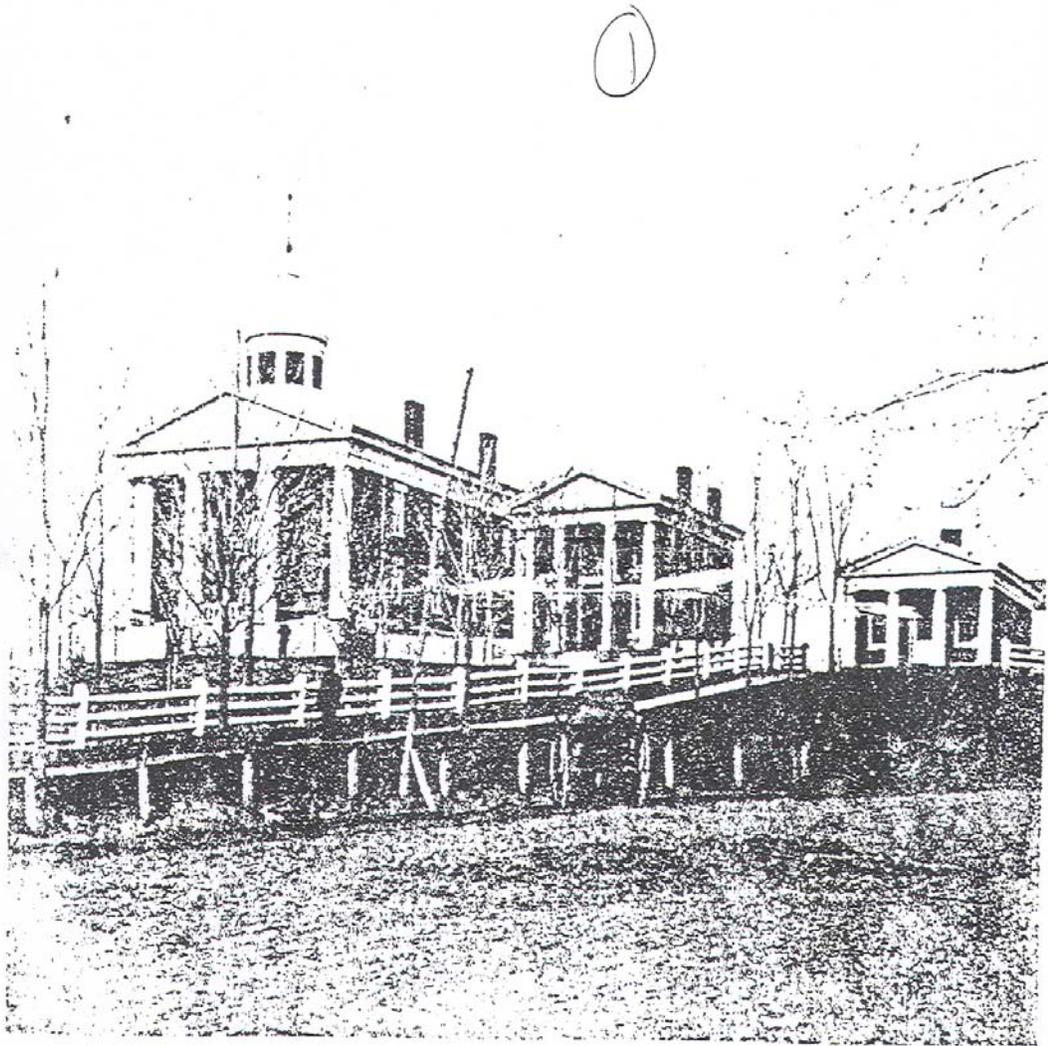


SENECA COUNTY HISTORY

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THE COUNTY BUILDINGS, OVID VILLAGE.

THE PIONEERS

In researching the old county records such as deeds, justice and various others, it is extremely difficult to establish who came first to settle in each of the towns.

Some of the claims have been well documented and credit should be given to these hardy souls who first ventured into the unknown wilderness. Although the Indians had been disbursed after the Sullivan-Clinton campaign in 1779, some certainly still remained when the first white settlers ventured into the area.

The knowledge that this land existed was probably the easiest part of the adventure. One need only to read the journals of the men who participated in the Sullivan-Clinton campaign to know that they were overwhelmed with the beauty of the area. They quickly saw the possibilities of establishing a future for themselves and their families.

Early histories list the first settlers as follows: Village of Waterloo, Samuel Bear; town of Waterloo, John Green; Village of Seneca Falls, Job Smith and Lawrence Van Cleef; Ovid, Andrew Dunlap; Lodi, George Faussett; Romulus, David Wisner and Anthony Swarthout; Covert, the Woodworth family; Tyre, Ezekiel Crane; Junius, Thomas Beadle; Varick, James McKnight; Fayette, James Bennett.

Ontario County was already established in 1790. The area that is now Seneca County had some settlers by that time but all were listed in the 1790 census under Whitestown, which covered a vast area of New York State at that time.

Actually, who came first is of little consequence. One need only study the 1800 census to realize the pioneers were coming from all possible directions.

The first semi-permanent settler was none of the above but a young Pennsylvanian named Horatio Jones. As a young man he became involved in the war in his home state. While on patrol with other soldiers, he was captured by the Indians and taken away. According to the legend, his charm, courage and ability kept him alive and when the war ended he was released.

Apparently he was released somewhere in this general area. He settled for a time along the banks of the Seneca River, somewhere between what is now Waterloo and Geneva. He had a trading post and dealt with the Indians and the hunters. He later moved farther west first to what is now Geneva, then later settled permanently in the present Livingston Co. He was a farmer and an interpreter.

The tales of the returning soldiers after the war through the Indian country was certainly a deciding factor in the settlement of the area. The names of many of those who participated can later be found among the early citizens of Seneca County: Andrew Dunlap, Peter Combs, *Tulis Covert*, Ezekiel and Stephen Crane, to name just a few.

It would be logical to presume that among the early settlers, many of these would be the men who received a lot in the Military Tract for their services in the Revolutionary War. In researching these men who were awarded land in the Military Tract, one can learn a great deal about them. The prime requisite seemed to be: the soldier had to serve in a New York regiment and for a regular soldier, he had to enlist for the duration of the war.

Suprisingly, very few of the men actually settled on their lot and those that did, came somewhat later than the earlier settlers.

Sterling

Those who settled on the lot they received in Seneca County were: Peter Dumasy; on lot 3; Romulus; Jacob Hicks, lot 10, Romulus; John Mills, lot 47, Ovid; Sylvanus Travis, lot 68, Ovid. The widow of John Gilchrist, who received lot 37 in Junius also settled for a time on the lot.

There was another group of veterans who received lots in another township, but settled instead in Seneca County.

Among these was Lawrence Van Cleef, who originally received a lot in what is now Cortland Co. He planned to settle on his lot but according to early documents, he found someone living on the lot when he arrived there. Because he was an officer in the service he was given a second choice, a lot in the former Cayuga Indian Reservation. This land is still the property of the VanCleaf family.

Others who received lots elsewhere but finally settled in Seneca County were: Andrew Dunlap; Degory Prout, Peter Sherman, Jacob Ackerly, Joshua Hinckley and Ephraim White. Prout and Sherman lived in Ovid and both of these men were leaders in the early church societies of the county. Joshua Hinckley settled in Romulus and Ackerly in Covert.

Ephraim White lived in Southampton, on Long Island. At the end of the war he received lot 37 in Ovid and also lot 32 in Junius which was originally given for his brother, Stephen, who died in the war. He sold both of these lots to Silas Halsey for 20 pounds. Apparently he still came to this area because he applied for a pension while a resident of Covert.

In the years that followed, many of lots in the Military Tract changed ownership so many times that the commissioners decided to cancel all sales and start all over again. By this time the Indian treaties had been negotiated and the lands of the former reservation were available for settlement.

The first 27 townships were all divided into 600 acre lots. The 28th Sterling was divided quite differently. There were parcels with less than 50 acres up to the normal 600 acres. A study of these recipients showed that although many were former servicemen or their heirs, there were also women included and others who were not old enough to have served in the Revolutionary War.

One of these was Jacob L. Larzelere who received 97 acres on lot 47 in Sterling. He was born in 1774 and therefore could not have served in the war. According to his obituary, he had worked as a surveyor and it is probably because of this work that he received his lot. He chose to sell his lot and settled near the Cayuga Bridge on the former Cayuga Indian reservation.

There are other early settlers who probably worked as agents in selling the lots. One can assume this because their names appear frequently as grantee on the early deeds with a far larger transfer of property than they originally purchased. Among these were: Benejah Boardman, Benjamin Dey and Joshua Wickoff. A thorough research would probably include others.

Lewis Birdsall possibly first came to this area to act as agent for his father-in-law who was Capt. Thomas Lee. Lee was a captain in the 5th Regiment and received three lots, one of which was lot 7 in Romulus. Lot 7, today includes the area known as "The Kingdom". From the beginning, it was apparent that this was a valuable piece of land.

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Thomas Lee was from Hudson, N.Y. and settled in what became Yates Co. He was an agent for Charles Williamson and was the first supervisor of Jerusalem. A former Quaker, it is said that he was one of those early settlers who came with "The Universal Friend"; Jemima Wilkinson.

His daughter Patience was the wife of Lewis Birdsall. Daughter Elizabeth married Lambert Van Aelstyn; Waty married Jacob Chamberlain and Nancy, was the wife of Hezekiah Keeler, all pioneers of the Waterloo-Seneca Falls area. Nancy's daughter Lucinda married John Knox, another prominent resident of Seneca County.

Tunis Covert, a pioneer of the Ovid area was with the Sullivan-Clinton campaign. He must have been very eloquent in his description of the area between the lakes. The 1800 census of Ovid, listed 14 Coverts as head of households, including Tunis.

(to be continued.)



BLACKS IN SENECA COUNTY-1810

Hugh W. Doblin of Junius was the assistant marshal for the 1810 Federal Census. According to that census, there were 125 blacks in the county which at that time included the Townships of Ulysses, Hector, to the south and all the area north to Lake Ontario.

The blacks were divided into three categories: slaves, free blacks living with a white family and free blacks, living alone.

Ulysses had the least, one free black man living with John Martin. At the top of the list was Robert S. Rose, in Fayette with 37 slaves. Ephraim and John Maynard of Junius had eight slaves between them and Thomas Helm of Wolcott had seven.

Other free blacks who were not dependent upon white benefactors were John Dunkerson in Fayette; Samuel West with a family of six and Simon Wells with five, in Romulus; Eli Dolphin, with four. The largest family belonged to Tom Wickoff of Hector who had 10 members.

People with slaves in Junius were Wilhelmus Mynderse with one; Robert Oliver, two; Daniel Sayre, two and Peter Miller, one. The only other person with slaves besides Rose, in Fayette was the Widow Van Cleef with two.

People in Romulus with slaves or free blacks were: Benjamin Dey, Benjamin ... William Boots, John Sayre, Hannah McKnight, John Schuyler, Stephen Miller, William Waldron, Solomon Culver, Lewis Miller and Israel Brown. William W. Folwell of Romulus and William Norris of Ovid each had one free black in their household.

Those in Ovid who had slaves were Eleanor Seeley, the widow of John who had one. Others included Abraham Van Doren, Levey Ellis, Thomas Stuart, Cornelius Bodine, William Ditmars, Henry Van Liew, Oliver Miller, William P. Gold, John Tunison and John Goltry. Only one man in Hector, Bazaleel Seely, was the owner of two slaves.

Quam DeMund who came to Seneca County a slave, shortly after 1810, He was freed, remained in the county and was quite successful. He raised a large family, was a land owner and left a will when he died.

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SILAS HALSEY.

SILAS HALSEY, JR.

Thomas Halsey, the emigrant was born in Hertfordshire, England about 1591, came to Lynn, Mass., about 1637 and to Southampton, N.Y. in 1640. Silas Halsey, the father was born at Southampton in 1718. Silas Halsey, Jr. was born in Southampton 10/17/1743.

He signed the Association in 1775 and was a committeeman to certify the election of a company of Minute Men in Southampton, early in 1776. He was chairman of the Committee of Safety in Southampton when the Revolutionary War started.

He was a physician in Lt. Col. John Hulbert's company. His term of service was brief for his family were among the immigrants of 1776 who went to Killingworth, Conn. His first wife, Sarah Radley, whom he married in 1764, died in 1778 in Connecticut, leaving four children.

He had studied medicine in Elizabeth N.J. and had been in practice for several years before the war. In Connecticut he worked with the officials who took care of the Refugees. In 1779, he petitioned, with others, for leave to buy bread in New York City.

His good behavior did not go unnoticed and in April, 1780, when he

asked to be allowed to return to Long Island, he was well recommended by the Killingworth officials. During his absence, his home in Southampton had been used by the British officials and was in very poor condition.

He resumed his medical practice. He was also connected with the hospital service of the army as a surgeon. He was active in town and county politics and after serving as deputy sheriff, he was elected sheriff of Suffolk County in 1787. He served as sheriff until 1791.

He then had a beautiful house in the village of Sag Harbor, on Peconic Bay. To be a successful physician, the sheriff of Suffolk County and to have a loving family should be a fulfillment and should give a man complete satisfaction.

To have struggled through the Revolutionary War, lost one's wife and home and returned to resume a good life, should be a reason for relaxation and possibly retirement.

Silas Halsey, at the age of 41 was not ready for a life of ease. This was only the beginning.

Ephraim White, a soldier from Southampton had received two lots in the Military Tract. One was for his service in the second company of the Fourth Regiment under Capt. John Davis. The lot was 37 in Ovid. The other had gone to his brother Stephen White, who died in service in the same company. As heir Ephraim also received Lot 32 in Junius.

White sold both his lots to Silas Halsey. It is possible that he was the man who first came to this area with Halsey for his name appears in Seneca County in the 1800 census and he applied for a pension while a resident of Covert, in 1820.

In April, 1792, Silas Halsey started on his journey, with, according to history, a white and a black servant. Some histories say that the black man was a slave. The 1776 census does not indicate that Halsey had any slaves, neither does the 1790.

They sailed from New York City to Albany in a sloop; went on foot to Schenectady and continued in a batteau to Fort Stanwix, now Rome. The men then sailed down Oneida Lake through its outlet, along the Seneca River and ended their journey at what is now Lodi Landing, on Seneca Lake. The trip took a little over a month.

Halsey had brought a yoke of oxen, some seed wheat and a stock of provisions. From the lake, the men hacked their way through the underbrush to where he established the location of his lot. The three men cleared about six acres of land, built a log cabin and planted the wheat. They also started a nursery by planting apple seeds from an old Indian orchard.

It has never been established whether both of the men returned to Long Island with Halsey. It would not have been feasible to take back the oxen, nor does it seem likely, the animals were killed or abandoned. Perhaps one of the men stayed behind to take care of them.

Halsey returned to Sag Harbor in October. The next spring, in May, 1793, he again left Southampton, this time permanently and with his family. There were 18 in all and it required three boats to carry them and their belongings. The women and children must have experienced a great deal of fear and anxiety on the trip.

Shortly after he arrived on his lot, he hired the Yost brothers of Scauys to build a saw mill and a grist mill. They had come the year before from Pennsylvania with Samuel Bear and had recently completed a mill for Bear.

When Silas Halsey first came to this area in 1792, it was then part of Herkimer County. In March, 1794, it became part of Onondaga County. Silas Halsey was named one of the first judges of the county court.

Ovid was established as a town and at the first town meeting, April 1, 1794, he was elected supervisor. He was the only justice and had to officiate when he took the oath of office.

He continued as supervisor when Ovid became a part of Cayuga County in 1799. In 1801 he was chosen as delegate from Cayuga County to the first New York State Constitutional Convention of which Aaron Burr was president.

He was the first assemblyman from Cayuga County and was re-elected in 1800-01-03-04.

He was still supervisor when Seneca County was formed from Cayuga on March 24, 1804 and was appointed first county clerk on April 2, 1804. Except for one year he held that office until 1819.

That same month, April, 1804, he was elected a member of Congress from the 17th Congressional District, succeeding Oliver Phelps.

How did a man from the newly established county of Seneca get to Washington, D.C. to fulfill his obligation to serve as a Congressman? By stage or boat it must have been an extremely difficult job, just to get there.

He was first a Whig but became a member of the Republican party, organized during George Washington's administration. He continued to support its principles during his life time.

In 1808, he was elected State Senator to fill a vacancy and served one year.

He was always interested in education and was one of the first

trustees of the old Cayuga Lake Academy at Aurora.

He retired from public office in 1819 when he resigned as county clerk. He lived to see three of his sons and two of his sons-in-law occupy prominent positions in civil service. His sons Jehiel and Nicol were also members of Congress. Son Lewis was a member of the state assembly. John DeMott, a son in law, was in the state legislature and also a member of Congress. Henry D. Barto, his daughter Frances' second husband was the first judge of Tompkins County.

Halsey was the first physician in Seneca County but gave up the practice of medicine at an early date when his medical student and son in law, Dr. Jared Sandford, took over the practice.

In 1800, one of his duties as supervisor was to appropriate land for a burying ground. This was one acre on Lot 3, which is the old cemetery in the village of Ovid. He also gave a portion of his land on Lot 37 for a burying ground.

Silas Halsey married three times. His second wife Hannah Howell died Dec. 4, 1810; his third wife, Abigail Howell died Feb. 18, 1831. Halsey died Nov. 19, 1832 at 90. He and his two wives lie side by side in the old Lodi Cemetery which he gave to the town. His mother Sarah is also buried in that cemetery.

Among his children: Nancy, married Joshua Wyckoff; Sally first married Dr. Jared Sandford and after his death, married John L. Eastman, also a physician. Daughter Mary Ann married John De Mott and son Jehiel H. married Sarah Gulick.



Silas Halsey, JR. , was the pioneer aristocrat of Seneca County His accomplishments in his medical practice; military and civil service were many. He was a man with great ambition. Although his roots were deep in Southampton and Suffolk County, he preferred to gamble and seek new horizons. One can't help wonder what thoughts his grown children had when they learned they would be leaving the comfortable life on Long Island and start anew in the wilderness of the west. One can only believe they were willing participants when one checks over their later accomplishments on their own behalf.

Not only Lodi, but all Seneca County residents can be proud of their pioneer aristocrat. Gov. George Clinton once wrote in his journal, "Whether Judge Halsey belongs to Seneca County or the county belongs to Judge Halsey is a problem I cannot solve."

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YOUNGEST AUXILIARY PRESIDENT

In 1941, Miss Frances Argus was elected president of the South Seneca County American Legion Auxiliary. She had the distinction of being the youngest auxiliary president in New York State. She had just graduated from the Ovid High School.

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THE TOWNS CAME FIRST

Seneca County was formed from Cayuga in 1804, but by that time there were hundreds of residents here and in order to have order it was necessary to have rules and regulations. Roads had to be built, some one had to take care of the poor. Schools were established and monies through taxes had to be collected to take care of the sundry problems that arose.

The collective government of a county could be handled from a distance: first in Fonda, county seat of Montgomery; next, Herkimer in Herkimer; then Syracuse in Onondaga and last, Auburn in Cayuga.

The roads, schools, poor and other local problems had to be dealt with on a more personal basis and so towns were established at an earlier date.

The towns of Romulus and Ovid were established April 1, 1794. This was done following an act of the assembly of the state entitled, "An act for the more orderly holding of town meetins." It passed on Feb. 4, 1794.

The early records do not indicate where the first meeting was held. In Romulus, William Winter was first appointed town clerk, presumably so that he could take the minutes of the meeting.

The other officers were: Benejah Boardman, supervisor; James Seeley, John Fleming, James Reynolds, assessors; Peter Huff, David Wisner, William Seeley, Jr. commissioners of highways.

Henry Leek and James Reynolds were named overseers of the poor; John Williams, Peter Reynolds, constables; and Peter Reynolds doubled as collector.

Jacob Striker, James McKnight, Anthony Swarthout, Sr. David DePue and Elijah Kinne, Jr. were appointed overseers of the roads; John Fleming



and John Swarthout, fence viewers: John Fleming and Jacob Striker, pound keepers.

Apparently swine running loose were no problem for it was confirmed "by the voice of the people", that swine shall run free commoners for the present year.

One of the first regulations set up was the marking of the different owner's animals. Each owner was given a specific mark and it was recorded. Benajah Boardman's animals were to have a crop off the right ear; Elijah Kinne's a crop off the left ear and a slit in the right ear. Another identifying mark was a penny or half-penny in one of the ears.

The first recorded notice of the freeing of a slave was also included in the town board minutes a few months later. William Seeley appeared before the board and made the following declaration. "Know all men of these presents that I William Seeley, formerly of the town of New Cornwell in the county of Orange, State of New York and now of the town of Romulus in the county of Onondaga, have and by these words, set free my Negroe slave named Charles Peterson, to all intents and purposes as if he had never been a slave. In witness whereof I hereunto set my hand and seal the seventeenth day of November in the year 1794. The witnesses were Joseph Brewster and Henry Townsend.

On October 23, 1794, the overseers of the poor, having examined the man certified that Charles Peterson, appeared to be under 50 years of age and of sufficient ability to provide for himself.

The next annual town board meeting was held at the house of James McKnight on April 7, 1795. This was probably a tavern since McKnight was an early tavern keeper.

Benajah Boardman continued as supervisor but Winter was replaced by George Bailey as town clerk.

Other changes included Dr. Alexander Coventry as overseer of the poor; William Shattock and William Brewster as commissioners of highways; Lewis Abrams as constable and collector.

The overseers of the roads were now divided into districts there were nine in Romulus in 1795.

It was agreed that swine could continue to be free commoners but rams had to be kept inclosed from September 1 until November 1 under penalty of 40 shilling. If a complaint was made in that time.

The Ovid records also do not tell where their first town meeting was held. Silas Halsey was elected supervisor and Joshua Wickoff, town clerk. Perhaps this was one of the early meetings that were held in the barn of Andrew Dunlap. Dunlap, along with Elijah Kinne, Sr. were named overseers of the poor; Kinne, Abraham Covert and George Faussett, assessors and overseers of highways. James Jackson, John Livingston and John Seeley, commissioners of highways.

Thomas Covert became pound master; Henry Sciventon, Daniel Everts, Elijah Kinney, John Seeley, James Jackson and Samuel Chriswell, fence viewers. To complete the slate of officers, Abraham Sebring was appointed collector and constable.

It was voted that six pounds be raised for the support of the poor and other contingent charges of the town. The proceedings were officially recognized by Silas Halsey as justice of the peace.

The only changes in the following year were the names of Grover Smith was added for overseer of highways and Israel Harris was one of the fence viewers. Most of the other men remained as officials although their specific duties were sometimes changed. It was noted that the next annual meeting would be at the home of Abraham Covert.

The act creating the Town of Washington (now Fayette), then in Cayuga County was passed March 14, 1800. It was noted that the first town meeting would be held at the house of Samuel Bear. James McClung was elected supervisor. The official records for the first two years are lost but Diedrich Willers in his Centennial History of the Town of Fayette, noted that in addition to McClung, other officers elected those first two years were: James Reynolds as commissioner of highway, assessor and overseer of the poor. Peter Reynolds and Robert Buckley were overseers of roads. In 1801, Wilhelmus Mynderse, James Reynolds and David Southwick were commissioners of highway.

For the first three years, the Town of Washington extended from the present south line of Fayette, north to Lake Ontario. Some of the officials lived in what later became Junius.

At the March 2, 1802 meeting the elected town officials of Washington were: Wilhelmus Mynderse, supervisor; Martin Kendig, town clerk; Asa Moore, Alexander Rorison, James Bennett, assessors.

David Southwick, Benajah Boardman and Ithamar Saunders were commissioners of highways; Heman Swift and James Sweet, overseers of the poor; Severus Swift and John Phelps, constables. Severus Swift was also collector and Jabez Gorham, pound master.

Overseers of the roads were referred to as path masters. In knowing where these people lived, through deeds and other records, one can establish the location of the

various districts.

Peter Reynolds was in charge of District 1; James Miller, 2; Daniel Dorrance, 3; Samuel Bear, 4; Jacob Chamberlain, 5; James Sweet, 6; Thomas Disbrow, 7; William Huff, 8; Jabez Disbrow, 9; Wilhelmus Mynderse, 10; Asa Bacon, 11; Jonah Hopkins, 12; Hugh W. Dobbin, 13; William Dumond, 14 and Heman Swift, 15.



Philip Edington, Alexander Rorison, Jabez Disbrow and Nathaniel J. Potters were fence viewers

There were two other types of committees not included in the records of Romulus and Ovid. James McClung, Jesse Southwick and Alexander Rorison were commissioners of the gospel and school lots. Apparently the size of the town was a deterrent to good government and the officials decided that something should be done about it. They appointed a committee to apply to the Legislature for dividing the town. The members of that committee were: David Southwick, Josiah Crane, James McClung, Wilhelmus Mynderse and Amasa Sherman.

In 1803, Benajah Boardman became supervisor. Since he was supervisor of Romulus in 1794 and 1795, one could assume that he moved farther north. Probably the change was not a personal one, but a change in the town line.

The first meeting for the Town of Junius was on March 1, 1803. John Parkhurst was clerk for the day. The supervisor, town clerk and assessors were voted in by ballot, the remaining officers were voted in by pole.

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Lewis Birdsall became supervisor, Gideon Bowdish, town cler; Asa Moore, Hugh W. Dobbin and Elisha Pratt, assessors.

Other officers were: Jesse Southwick, Jabez Disbrow, Nathaniel J. Potter, commissioners of highways; Heman Swift, Stephen Hooper, overseers of the poor; Jacob Chamberlain and Severus Swift as constables with Swift also serving as collector.

Samuel Lay and Robert Oliver were named fence viewers and Lay was poundmaster. Potter, Dobbin, Chamberlain, Josiah Crane, James Tripp, Henry Brightman and Benjamin Collins were appointed overseers of roads; Wilhelmus Mynderse, Jesse Southwick and Gideon Bowdish, commissioners for gospel and school lots.

In 1804 the meeting was at the house of Stephen Hooper, innkeeper. The town board voted that a bounty of \$5 would be paid per head on wolves. It also noted that no hogs over six months, no stud horse and no ram would be allowed to run free.

From 1805 until 1810 the meetings were at the house of Lewis Birdsall. According to early justice records trials for writs of inquiry were also held at the Lewis Birdsall house in the early years. This building, probably the oldest brick buildin in north Seneca County if not the entire county is presently in danger of being demolished.

In 1804 when Seneca County was formed, John Livingston was supervisor of Hector and Archer Green, supervisor of Ulysses. Wolcott was taken off Junius in 1810 and Osgood Church was elected supervisor of that town.

In 1812, the area now part of Wayne County became Galen with Jonathan Melvin as supervisor. In 1817, Wolcott was re-instated as a town and Hector, Ulysses and part of the present Seneca County were put into Tompkins County.

Covert came back to Seneca County in 1819, somewhat different in size and form than it is today. Levi Wheeler was the first supervisor. Galen and Wolcott were taken off in 1823 to go to Wayne County.

Lodi became a town with John DeMott as the first supervisor. Tyre, Seneca Falls and Waterloo were formed from the original township of Junius in 1829. Allen Hammond was the first supervisor of the smaller Junius; Dr. Thomas C. Magee of Tyre; Garry V. Sackett, Seneca Falls and Richard P. Hunt, Waterloo.

The tenth and final town of what now comprises Seneca County, Varick, was added in 1830 by taking away part of Romulus. Anthony Dey was the first supervisor. The size of the towns and the county has remained the same to the present day.



"BOOK LARNIN" WAS HERE
FROM THE BEGINNING

On February 28, 1789, the State Legislature passed "An Act to appropriate the Lands set apart for the use of the Troops of the Line of this State, lately serving in the Army of the United States." One stipulation in the act was that one lot in each township be set aside for the promoting of the gospel, and the public schools, one for promoting literature, and four to be used for commissioned officers who did not receive their fair allotment, or who found his land under water.

When the survey was completed it was found that six lots in each township was to be set aside for the use of the gospel or schools.

In Romulus the lots were: 38, 45, 50, 55 and 59. In Ovid they were: 9, 23, 30, 35, 55 and 84; in Junius, 7, 9, 25, 67, 78, and 79. Apparently some of the lots went for the welfare of schools out of the area, possibly schools of higher learning. Among the early deeds there are one or more deeds which indicate Clinton College was the grantee of a lot.

How much of the money received for the early sales was returned to local schools would be difficult to ascertain but some of it must have been used locally for the towns appointed commissioners of the lots to regulate the sale of the property.

In Ovid the first commissioners to take care of the public lots were: Andrew Dunlap, Grover Smith and Abraham Covert. Wilhelmus Mynderse, Benjamin Dey and Daniel Sayre, James McClub, Jesse Southwick and Alexander Rorison were also commissioners of school lots.

Shortly after each town was organized, commissioners of schools were elected or appointed. In Ovid the first were: Grover Smith, Tunis and Abraham Covert; in Romulus,

Benajah Boardman, George Bailey and William Brewster. Although Fayette and Junius appointed commissioners of the gospel and school lots, early records do not show the names of commissioners of schools.

In 1812, the State Legislature passed an act for the organization and establishment of common schools. It provided a small annual appropriation from the state. It was probably under this act that the men of Fayette and Junius were elected school commissioners.

There is evidence that there were schools in Seneca County prior to this time. John Bainbridge had a private school in the weaver shop of Haynes Bartlett, in Fayette, prior to 1800. Elijah Miller who settled in Romulus for a time with his father, Capt. Josiah Miller, taught school near the present Hayt's Corners about 1796. He later studied for the law and was a noted attorney in Auburn. He was also probably an agent for the Federal government in disposing of the land in Seneca County. His name appears on many of the early deeds.

Before 1813, the schools were mainly private, support at a fixed rate per scholar, during each term, payable to the teacher.

It is probable that schools were conducted in various buildings such as church society rooms, shops such as Bartlett's and possibly sometimes in homes.

The first complete listing of schools by district for Seneca County is 1855. Prior to that date, the school reports, prepared by the commissioners, listed the number of schools in each town, the number of students attending and the number of children between five and 16 living within each district.



VARICK

In some schools, the students were all from that particular district. In others they lived in a different district than the one in which they attended school. Part districts were credited to the various towns.

One of the questions asked on the 1855 report was: When was the school built? Varick had one built in 1813, a log building; Covert, one in 1818 and Ovid, one in 1826. Most of the others throughout the county, and there were over 100 school districts in 1855, were built between 1845 and 1855.

Among the old county papers there is an early form letter from Gideon Hawley, State Superintendent of Common Schools, date, 1816, which said, "Due to the Act for the better establishment of common schools, passed, April 15, 1814, the amount of \$60,000 had been apportioned. Seneca County will receive \$1,239.50."

Seneca County then included all that area south to Ithaca, which included the townships of Ulysses and Hector, north to Lake Ontario.

In 1823, the Secretary of State, John V.N. Yates was also acting superintendent of common schools. His report to John Maynard, Seneca County Clerk indicated that the county, because of an increase in monies apportioned would receive \$1,035.72. The total amount for the state had been increased to \$80,000.

This was an increase for Seneca County because it was now smaller in size, in fact it was the same size it is today.

The breakdown for allotments was: \$5.62 for every 100 persons in each town. Covert with 3,439 persons received, \$200.40; Ovid with 2,654 received \$154.65.

Romulus had a population of 3,698 and was given, \$215.51; Fayette had 2,869 with an allotment of \$167.20 and Junius, with 5,113 "souls", received \$397.96. The total population for Seneca County in 1823 was 17,773.

Covert had 11 part districts and nine full districts. There were 1,670 students taught during the year and 1,647 children living within the district. The length of time schools were in session varied from a minimum of five months to 12 months. The school commissioners were: Robert Herriott, John DeMott and Allyn Boardman.

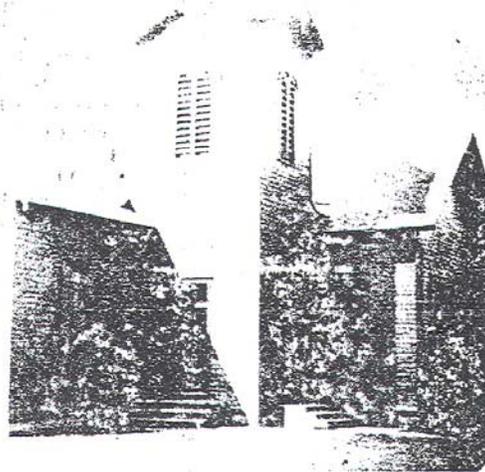
In addition to the apportionment, the town received \$198.40 from the county treasurer and \$775.20, from the trustees of the gospel and school lots.

Ovid had six whole districts and 10 part districts. There were 938 students in the schools during the year and 849 children in the district. At the end of the school year, the commissioners, Charles Starrett, John P. Nevius and Mathias Slaght had \$6.68 left over.

Romulus had 16 full districts and three part districts. There were 1,277 students taught and 1,372 children between five and 16. The commissioners did not have any fund left over although they did receive, \$129 from the commissioners who served in 1822. The commissioners in 1823 were: Mathew D. Covert and Mather Marvin.

A new district had just been formed in Fayette giving it a total of 12 full district and two part. There were 786 students and 946 children. School books in use were: Webster and Cobb's spelling book; American Selection, Introduction to the English Reader and some geographys. The commissioners were: James Huff and Jacob Hicks.

Junius which then included the present towns of Junius, Tyre, Waterloo and Seneca Falls had 19 full and four part districts. There were 1,318 students and 1,562 children. The commissioners were: Mathias B. Bellows, Jason Smith and Elihu O. Halsted.



The Lodi Village School, built about 1913, after an earlier building burned down in September 1912.

NEW YORK



JOHN M. HILL

John M. Hill died August 22, 1940, the last surviving Civil War veteran in Seneca County. He was born in Waterloo, May 19, 1846, the son of Abram and Nancy Hill.

He first tried to enlist when he was 16, but his father stopped him. He waited a year, then tried again at 17 and was successful.

He enlisted in Battery B. 3rd New York Artillery. He drove a lead team in the artillery during most of his service. After he was discharged from the army at the end of the war he returned to Waterloo and resumed his trade as carpenter and builder.

He was married to Mary Jane Buck, daughter to William and Eliza Ann Buck of Junius on October 15, 1868 in Clyde by the Rev. V.A. Sage.

He and his wife had four children One child died young. The others were: Frank, Helen and Lottie. At one time the family lived on Chestnut St. in Waterloo.

His daughter Lottie married Peter M. Doran of Seneca Falls, January 1, 1917. His wife Mary died June 14, 1934 and after her death he went to Seneca Falls to live with his daughter. He died when he was 94 and is buried in Maple Grove Cemetery with his wife and Father.

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PROMOTIONS

Three Waterloo policemen were promoted to the rank of sergeant, May 14. They are: Richard Schweitz, a 15-year veteran of the Waterloo Police Department. He had been youth officer-investigator since 1978. The others were Dan Driscoll who had been with the department since 1975 and Ken Brown, a 14-year veteran of police work.

It was the first time such promotions had been made in Waterloo since 1979 when Sgt. Robert Cook retired.



NECROLOGY

Charles L. Nelson, 63, of 18 W. River St. Waterloo, a former Fayette supervisor, died April 18, 1984 at the Clifton Springs Hospital.

Mr. Nelson was born Oct. 22, 1920 at Waterloo, the son of Christian and Katherine Swick Nelson. He was a life resident of Waterloo.

He was Fayette Town Clerk from 1952 until 1963; Fayette Town Supervisor from 1964 until 1973 and later served as town assessor.

He was an Army Air Force veteran of World War, II. He was a member of the Waterloo Methodist Church.

He was owner and operator of Nelson's Service Station on West River Street for several years and later was employed as parts and service manager at Peter Koch.

He is survived by his wife Beth; one son, Charles E. of Waterloo; one daughter, Mrs. Robert (Kathleen) LeRoy of Ontario, N.Y. one sister Mrs. Robert (Ethel) Martin of Rush, N.Y. three grandchildren; one niece and one nephew.

Burial was in Lakeview Cemetery Interlaken.

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FIRST AIRPLANE

The first airplane to visit Seneca County was a DeHaviland which landed in the Thomas Brothers hayfield on July 8, 1919.

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SOMETHING NEW FOR SENECA

It seemed fitting to do something special for the 180th anniversary of Seneca County. As historian I have collected many interesting stories of the people and events of the last 180 years.

This is Volume 1. No. 1. of a quarterly which, hopefully will introduce you to some of these events and former citizens who helped to shape this county and country. Hopefully other local historians will be willing to share some of their stories.

Thanks go to the Seneca Falls Museum, the Waterloo Historical Society and Wayne Morrison for allowing me to copy some of the old photographs and sketches; to John Wilson, Wyoming Co. historian for allowing me to use his format in arranging the magazine.

The friendly letters in the logo are the work of Mary Jane Merkel.

The subscription rate is \$5 a year. Single copies are \$1.50 or \$1.75 by mail. Checks should be made payable to Seneca County Historian and sent to 31 Thurber Dr. Waterloo, N.Y. 13165.

Betty Auten
Seneca County Historian



WATERLOO CHANGES SUPERVISORS

LaVerne Sessler, supervisor of the Town of Waterloo for eight years, resigned effective May 31, for business and personal reasons.

Mr. Sessler was town justice from 1970 to 1974. At that time he was elected supervisor for a two-year term. He was defeated in 1976 but returned in 1978 and has continued as supervisor since that time.

Over 100 friends attended a retirement dinner on June 21.

Richard Terbush, former town justice was unanimously accepted by the town board as Sessler's replacement.

Mr. Terbush was appointed town justice in 1967. He was elected to that position in 1973 and continued to serve until he resigned in 1983.

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A SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Mrs. June Callaghan, long time town and village justice of Seneca Falls, received state-wide recognition through a resolution, passed in May, by the State Assembly. The resolution was sponsored by Assemblyman Michael F. Nozzolio.

Mrs. Callaghan was Seneca Falls Town Justice from 1974 to 1978 and village justice from 1976 until 1982 when she retired. She had also served as Seneca Falls Court-Clerk from 1955 to 1978.

FOR THE GENEALOGISTS

For the historian-genealogist cemetery records will be included in this magazine. Those used will be records that have not been printed in recent publications.

The first series will be from the old Stark St or Williams Cemetery. These records were copied about 1945 by WPA workers from the original internment records. These records are no longer available and therefore names will be included that would not be found today, on the cemetery stones. Perhaps on some of these records accuracy on dates might be questionable but their value as a genealogy tool cannot be questioned.

ALBRO

Polly, wife of Joseph, died, 4/23/1841, 26-7-28

ALLIGER

Benjamin, d. 7/14/1850, 36-8-0
Elizabeth Kortright, wife of Benjamin, b. 1/1/1809, d. 12/30/1880 in Ulster Co.
Cornelius B. 1st Sgt. 126th Reg. d. 10/31/1910, 66-7-17
George Bevier, son of Cornelius d. 3/8/1870, 1-4-0
(see Hendricks)

BADGLEY

George I. 2/6/1856, 57
Rhinenah, 10/10/1826
George M. 8/31/1838, 1-0-20

BAILEY

William Ithriam, 3/17/1850, 1-1-0

BALCH

Thomas, 1/16/1840, 75

BALDWIN

Parmelia Smith, 9/14/1834, 64

BARCE

Nancy, 11/27/1827, 16
Matilda, 5/12/1858, 13

BARKER

William Henry, son of Pierre A. 5/25/1823, 7-11-10

BARNES

Abel, 8/7/1826, 34

BECK
 two children of Herman, 4/1/1884
 BERRY
 Fred E. 9/9/1862, 0-8-9
 BIRDSEY
 Marissa Jameson, 3/24/1911,
 66-5-0
 BLOOMER
 John, 9/19/1849, 71-7-10
 BOLSBY
 Catherine, 3/1/1890, 32-10-15
 BOOTH
 Ann, 8/20/1822, 32
 BORTZ
 Clara S. 2/15/1930, 88
 Lewis, 2/27/1880, 1-6-0
 Clara M. 12/28/1869, 4
 Cecelia, M. 3/9/1864, 3
 Agnes E. 3/4/1864, 3
 BOSTWICK
 D.W. 3/21/1873, 90
 Lucretia, 10/14/1826, 39
 Lydia L. 11/5/1874, 67
 Lucy A. 3/4/1864, 42
 BREESE
 John, 9/8/1890, 70
 BRIDGEMAN
 Cephus, 2/1/1853, 56
 Mary, 10/23/1880, 83
 Theodore P. 1/15/1862, 29
 John C. 2/16/1863, 29
 BROOKS
 Martha, 3/12/1885, 33
 BROWN
 Chester, 6/29/1821
 Abraham, 2/22/1892, 93
 Adam, 6/25/1842, 27
 Henry, 10/7/1842, 20-3-23
 Lucy Williams, no date
 Mary T. (child) no date
 John J. 3/8/1906, 73
 BUCK
 Thomas S. 4/3/1914, 70-2-28
 Ida May, 3/3/1864, 0-7-10
 Amelia, 1/23/1899, 22
 BURCH
 Hiram L. 4/4/1841, 1-4-1
 BURKE
 Michael, 10/6/1882, 48
 BYRON
 John, 12/17/1862, 35
 CANFIELD
 Thomas, 6/7/1839, 41-7-20
 CAREY
 Charles Nelson, 12/2/1883, 66
 Janette, 11/12/1891, 70
 David H. 8/22/1838, 1-4-0

CASSIDY
 Quintillidian, 4/18/1828, 42
 CHAPIN
 Emeline M. 6/6/1856
 CHILDS
 Amherst, 10/17/1832, 62
 Lucy, 7/10/1842, 73
 Susan P. 5/5/1849, 23
 Frank N. 12/26/1847, 0-7-2
 Edward P. 4/15/1854, 5
 CLARK
 Matthew H. 12/21/1837, 44-11-0
 Hannah Monroe, 10/17/1836, 18-1-0
 CLEMENSON
 John, 3/17/1847, 52-2-29
 Ann, 6/26/1847, 46-3-27
 COLE
 Rufus B. 10/2/1907, 88
 CONKLIN
 Charles, 10/20/1842, 1-10-20
 COOK
 Caroline, 7/15/1849, 54-1-21
 COOPER
 Mary Louisa, 9/23/1844, 3-22-23
 CORWIN
 George, 3/28/1833, 0-6-4
 CORYELL
 Helen, 12/5/1863, 3-2-0
 CROBAUGH
 George, 6/23/1898, 85
 DALRYMPLE
 Shepherd, 1/25/1848, 28
 DAY
 Eliza Parsons, 7/14/1826, 25
 Eliza, 9/18/1823, 26
 DEMOND
 James M. 5/29/1906, 52
 Anna, 5/6/1906, 49
 DEPEW
 Mary, 3/13/1892, 40
 DEUEL
 John, 8/10/1833, 40
 Jane Elizabeth, 8/3/1849, 14-6-0
 DEY
 Schuyler, 6/7/1848, 9
 DOLE
 John, 3/29/1845, 65
 Henry, 5/28/1835, 25-2-0
 George N. 4/13/1849, 9-3-0
 William H. 7/19/1843, 0-10-3
 Albert L. 10/9/1848, 1-6-3
 DOUGLASS
 Henry, 4/3/1899, 77
 Louise, 6/31/1888, 66

(to be continued)