



A Bicentennial Tribute

Issue I • Spring 2007

CELEBRATE 200 YEARS WITH US: 1807-2007

200 years ago, on April 7, 1807, the first Nelson Town Meeting was held in the Rufus Weaver barn. We are celebrating with the following special events:

APRIL 7, 2007, 2PM

Unveiling of the Bicentennial marker at the Rufus Weaver barn, now owned by Brian Enders. (Old State Road and Erieville Road) with guest speakers and refreshments at the Nelson Town Office Building

JUNE 2007 – Farm Tours

JUNE 22, 2007, 6-8PM

Ice Cream Social with entertainment by Robin Shade at Erieville Ball Field

JULY 21, 2007

Town picnic, games and old-time baseball at “Woody” Woodworth Memorial Ball Field, Nelson

AUGUST 2007

Play - “John Buck Murder Trial” and concert at Nelson Methodist Church

A raffle will be held for the quilted wall hanging shown here; it features pictures from Erieville and Nelson’s past. The winning ticket will be drawn at the August event. Tickets are available at the Town Office Building and from Bicentennial Committee members.

T-shirts with the town logo are available from committee members.

The publication of this newspaper, “A Bicentennial Tribute”, marks the beginning of our celebration. A second issue will follow in the summer.

This is a very special year for the Town of Nelson, and we extend a hearty welcome to all residents to join us. Come out and meet your neighbors and learn a little history at the same time. We hope to see you all this summer!

The Bicentennial Committee: Gary Anderson, Miriam Barrows, Carol Booth, Cathy Casler, Reg Card, Kevin Davies, Sonia Sadoff Davies, Judy Davis, Denise Earl, M. Fay Lyon, Celia Markowski, Shirley Miller, Dorene Lyon Setliff, Chris Westcott, Dick Williams, and Glenys Williams.

Donations to cover the expense of the newspaper and the other events are gratefully accepted at the Nelson Town Office Building or contact Kevin Davies at 655-3298 or Fay Lyon at 655-8045. Extra copies of this paper are available at Kay’s Store, Nelson Farms, Brookside Greenhouses and the Nelson Town Office Building.



THE TOWN OF NELSON: A GREAT 200 YEARS

A Word from Assemblyman Bill Magee

Nelson, a great place to live, work and raise a family for two hundred years! Having grown up in Erieville, having married the former Jeanette Nichols, a Nelson girl herself, having spent over 40 years living on Nelson’s main street of Route 20 and having served Nelson in various public capacities for the past 36

years, I can honestly say that it is a unique and wonderful town. The first 200 years of its existence have been great, and there is no doubt that the next 200 will continue to prove that the Town of Nelson is a truly outstanding town full of history and lore, families and friends.

CONGRATULATIONS & HAPPY 200TH BIRTHDAY TO THE TOWN OF NELSON

From Richard Williams, Town of Nelson Supervisor

This is truly an historic and memorable year for the Town of Nelson. Over its 200-year history the town has been through up and down cycles, but the community sustained itself and continued to flourish and prosper. Our family has resided in Nelson for 26 years, and we have seen many changes in this relatively recent history. Traditional farming has diminished and residential development continues at a slow but steady

rate. This evolution is inevitable, but as we ponder Nelson’s 200-year history, I believe we need to be mindful of our traditions and do our best to help preserve our historical culture and community. Our Nelson Town Board is very committed to protecting and preserving Nelson’s historical resources and sense of community. This is why we came, and this is why we stay in this wonderful town.



A WORD FOR OUR HISTORIAN

In Charles Dickens' story, *A Christmas Carol*, Mr. Scrooge dreams of Christmas Past, Present and Future. We can equate his encounters with the ghosts of our history – Past, Present and Future. If one asks why history is more important to some, while others couldn't care less, he or she only has to look at the footprint that a family might have made on the development of a community. If your ancestors have made an historical impact on the evolution of an area, you might be more inclined to be interested in how that particular community evolved. This is true in my case.

Being a historian is a challenge, but it is also a privilege. I have relied on all sorts of documents including research by other historians, old writings, and new discoveries. In my case, I have the added incentive of being the descendant of a family that was a part of this community (both Cazenovia and Nelson) from the very first. Ebenezer Lyon, my 6th generation grandfather, came with his family from Vermont to Township No. 1 in 1794 along with 25 other families. At that time, the township was part of Cazenovia, as were Fenner and Smithfield, and his influence as a Common Law Judge extended well beyond the present day borders of Nelson. Then, on March 13, 1807, Nelson was named and incorporated as a separate town under the laws of NY State; the first town meeting was held the next month, April 7, 1807.

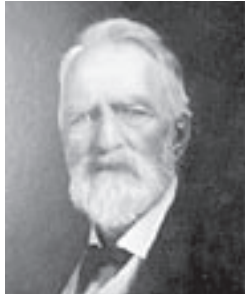
The first official town meeting was held in the barn of another ancestor, Rufus Weaver. That barn still exists today and is owned by Brian Enders. Located at the end of Old State

Road on Erieville Rd., it was formerly owned by Cazenovia College. At that first town meeting, Ebenezer was elected the first Supervisor of the Town of Nelson. Also at that meeting was another 6th generation grandfather of mine, David Case, who had arrived from Simsbury, Connecticut in 1804. As time evolved, Ebenezer's son, Merit, married David Case's daughter, Polly. They had three children: Laura, who died at 6 years old, David and Merritt. In 1835, Merit, Polly and David moved to Bloomington, Illinois leaving little Merritt here with his grandparents. In 1837, Merit died, and Polly and David moved back home to Nelson shortly thereafter. After David died in 1860, Merritt, the only surviving son, continued to farm with his mother and grandfather on Lyon Road. Merritt served as Town supervisor in 1874 and more importantly, became interested in history. In the early 1900's, he became a charter member of the Madison County Historical Society, and much of his original correspondence has been saved. By consulting historical records of the Town of Cazenovia, Merritt was instrumental in gathering information concerning the purchasers of the original lots in the Town of Nelson.

Great Great Grandfather Merritt Lyon's research continues to help me in my own research as does that of former Town of Nelson historians, including Owen Evans, and unofficial historians, including Reg Card and David Jones and many others. I hope to do my small part in preserving a little more knowledge and making it accessible to future generations.

To become involved in Nelson's history and to meet other interested Nelsonians, everyone is welcome to join our history group, The Erieville-Nelson Heritage Society.

Merritt Fay Lyon, Town of Nelson Historian



**Merritt D. Lyon
1835-1918**

EARLY NELSON: GOVERNMENT, LAND AND ROADS

Taken from the document "The Township of Nelson" prepared by Merritt D. Lyon for the Madison County Centennial in 1906 with additional information provided by M. Fay Lyon.

In 1789, the New York "State Legislature ordered the survey of newly acquired territory lying north of a point on the Unadilla River ten miles from its junction with the Susquehanna and south of the Oneida Reservation." This tract of land was divided into twenty portions, the "Twenty Townships". Of these, the one occupying the northwest corner of the tract was Township No. 1, later to become the Town of Nelson. On July 15, 1791, the state sold the Township to Messrs. Webster, Savage and Williams for three shillings and six pence per acre. Before all the payments were made, they disposed of this purchase to Mr. Metlock of New York City, and he, on the 28th of August 1792, transferred all his interest to purchasing agents of the Holland Land Company for five shillings or 62.5 cents an acre. According to calculations made July 31, 1802, there were a little over 27,652 acres of land in the town. Thus the town cost the Holland Land Company about seventeen thousand dollars.

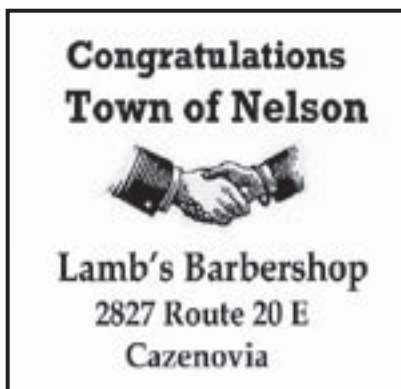
The Land Company, through its agent Mr. John Lincklaen, divided the township into farms usually of 150 acres each and sold them to the first settlers of the town. "Their first sale was made to David Fay who on June 1, 1793, bought lot No. two at \$1.50 per acre. Their last recorded sale was made thirty six years later when David Menter bought a part of lot 161 at \$6.00 dollars an acre, July 14, 1829. . . . The articles of agreement usually provided that the purchaser pay ten dollars down and the balance with interest at 7% within a term of years. It was also frequently stipulated in the contract that the purchaser make certain improvements, clearing a few acres and sowing them to grain with(in) twelve or twenty for (sic) months."

By act of legislature, March 13, 1807, Township No. 1, which had until that date been politically a part of Cazenovia, was organized as a town by itself. By the same act, it was directed that the first town meeting be held "at the dwelling house of Rufus Weaver in said town." It was actually held in Mr. Weaver's barn on April 7, 1807. The election which took place at that first meeting resulted in the choice of

Continued on page 3



*Cherry Valley Turnpike through Nelson looking east, early 1900s.
Where are all the trees in the swamp?*



A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

The editor of this newspaper would like to thank the many people who made it possible. First, a note of appreciation to Beverly Marris who set a high standard with the publication of three issues of *The Erieville-Nelson Patriot* which she put together in 1976, typing all the articles on a manual typewriter. Computers can be maddening at times but they certainly can make things easier.

Secondly, many thanks to special members of the Bicentennial Committee: Fay Lyon, town historian and contributor par excellence; Denise Earl, writer and photographer; Sonia Sadoff Davies, interviewer and writer; Cathy Casler, meeting secretary; Kevin Davies, advertising finances; Miriam Barrows,

treasurer. Others who contributed written articles, oral information and fact checking, all much appreciated, were: Marilyn Jones Beard, Donna Burdick, Leta Card, Reg Card, Luella Davis, Anne Kelley, Merritt D. Lyon Jr., Bill Magee, Kay Richards Mansfield, Celia Markowski, Carol Owens Marsh, Shirley Miller, Roberta Moseley, Everett Murray, Greg Owens, David Penoyer, John Roberts, Margie Lyga Sack, John Tabai, Carol Tacea, Jay Williams III and Richard Williams. If your article does not appear in this issue of the paper, look for it in the second issue to come out in early summer.

Brent Sellick of the *Hi Neighbor* has been most helpful. Lynn Herzig has been the source of good business ideas and Ed

Setliff has provided stories, photographs by the score, and proof reading beyond the call of duty. Of course we thank our advertisers whose ads appear in the following pages. The following have made donations beyond or instead of advertising dollars:

Caz Cartage (Richard and Julie Hackney)
Gary Howe
Bill and Jeanette Magee
J. Richard Manier, Jr.
Quality Auto of Cazenovia
Mr. and Mrs. Jeff Rubenstein
The Trush Family
Eric Setliff
Alissa Setliff and David Jeans

We are looking forward to the publication of the second issue of "A Bicentennial

Tribute" which will include articles on Nelson's railroad, the arrival of the Welsh immigrants, Nelson Swamp, cheesemaking in the town and much more including more personal remembrances. We encourage suggestions, contributions and especially old pictures which we can copy and publish. Advertisers can contact Kevin Davies (655-3298).

Please enjoy the paper. We hope you will gain appreciation for our history.

Dorene Lyon Setliff, Editor

Early Nelson: Continued from page 2



Early Erieville with a view down Main Street.

Ebenezer Lyon as the Town of Nelson's first Supervisor, and of John Rice as its first Town Clerk. The next town meeting was held in the same place in 1808 and resulted in the reelection of the Supervisor and some of the other officers.

"The first state road built across the town of Nelson was constructed in 1798. It followed the south line of the northernmost tere(sic) of lots coming out westward near the Remington Farm and running 80 or 100 rods north of Nelson Village. Major Ashel Jackson built a large hotel on this road northeast of Nelson Flats. For those days, it was an imposing and attractive building constructed throughout of the finest of white ash and pine and cherry. The little cluster of houses that sprang up about this generous hostelry was given the classic name of 'Argos' and this might well have been the name of the township. But when the turnpike was completed in 1810 and the state road abandoned, Mr. Jackson's hotel was left high and dry, a fifth of a mile from the line of travel. Yet Major Jackson was a man of such public spirit that he was one of the trustees who built the turnpike that sidetracked his own inn."

The second east-west road, built about 1804, ran across the Weaver farm and back to the line of lots near the Welsh Church and eastward to Morrisville, then known as Morris Flats. According to M. Fay Lyon, this was the "Old" State Road which joined with what is now Lyon Road and then Ballina Road (in the Town of Cazenovia). It was the main Road to Erieville.

The third great thoroughfare through the town was the Cherry Valley Turnpike (now Route 20) chartered March 24, 1803 and completed around 1811. "The trustees were authorized to issue stock to the extent of 3 000 shares at \$25 each. Specific directions were given for the construction of the road. It shall be '33 feet wide between ditches, whereof 28 feet shall be bedded with wood, stone or gravel.' The company, of whom John Lincklaen and Major Ashel Jackson were members, was permitted to erect a gate every ten miles and to collect toll at the following rates: Every score of hogs or sheep, 5 cents;

of cattle, horses or mules, 12 ½ cents; one horse chase(sic) 12½ cents; chariot or coach 25 cents. Exemptions from paying toll were provided for persons going to their farms, to public worship, to a funeral, from or to a mill or blacksmith shop within three miles or for a physician. One third rates were charged on any wagon with tires nine inches wide and wagons with tires twelve inches wide were passed free of charge. . . It was also provided that the company should be disbanded by the legislature when the stock was fully paid for, the road then reverting to the state. . . . It was not till after 1852, when the stages were taken off, that the road was abandoned by its owners."

According to M. Fay Lyon, the fourth major road was the Skaneateles Turnpike which is now Eatonbrook Road and Damon Road. This was built starting 1806 and completed some years later. The road was heavily financed by Morse of the Morse, Taber and Wood Company in order to make it easier to transport grain into Eaton to be used in his distillery business. Luna Hammond (*History of Madison County*, published in 1872 by Truair, Smith and Co., Syracuse) tells of a preacher by the name of Tadhams who was driving by the Wells' homestead on this road when one of the Wells' mules started braying. Tadhams' horse, having never heard such a noise, was spooked and upset the buggy. Elder Tadhams commented, "Why would Jesus ever ride on such an animal?" After that, the hill was referred to as "Jackass Hill".

Merritt D. Lyon continues: "Now a last word about the inhabitants. The original settlers came from New England and were of English descent. About 65 years ago the Welsh began to come to Nelson. The first Welshman to come here was John Evans. He came in 1842 or 3. John Reese and Thomas Meridith followed soon after. Today (1906), about one third of the population are of that nationality. Their industry and thrift have put them into possession of large farms; their children fill the school, and theirs is by far the most prosperous church in the town." Among the original settlers were ten men who had served in the Revolutionary War.

1807: A VERY INTERESTING YEAR

(Thanks to "wikipedia")

The world is an interesting place in 1807. By this year, 17 states have joined the Union, the last one being Ohio which joined in 1803. New York joined on July 26, 1788, the 11th state to do so. Thomas Jefferson is the president of the US and George Clinton, the first and longest serving governor (21 years) of New York State, is the Vice President. The Governor of New York is Morgan Lewis, and later this year Daniel D. Tompkins will take over. They are members of the Democrat-Republican Party (which is not related to the present day Republican Party). George III is King of England, and the Napoleonic Wars continue with the attack on Russia in February.

On March 2, 1807, the US Congress passes the act "to prohibit the importation of slaves into any port or place within the jurisdiction of the United States." It is signed into law by the President. On May 22, former Vice President Aaron Burr, recently acquitted of murder in the duel with Alexander Hamilton, is indicted for treason. He is accused of plotting to annex parts of the Louisiana Purchase to become part of an independent republic. On September 1, he is acquitted.

John Colter, a member of the Lewis and Clark expedition who remained in the west as a fur trader, explores the Wyoming country and discovers geysers and hot springs

(probably the present day Yellowstone Park). Zebulon Pike arrives at the Rio Grande and continues his exploration of the South West.

February 27 marks the birth date of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow of *Paul Revere's Ride* and *Song of Hiawatha* fame. The author of *Amazing Grace*, D. John Newton, dies on December 21. Beethoven composes his *Mass in C* for Prince Nikolaus Esterhazy in celebration of the name day of the Prince's wife. However, Prince Nikolaus does not appreciate the *Mass*, and Beethoven leaves his house in a rage, taking the music with him and later dedicating it to someone else.

The first passenger carrying railway, actually horse drawn carriages, originates in Wales. It is called the Oystermouth Railway, later becoming the Swansea and Mumbles Railway.

Robert E. Lee is born on January 19. On August 17, Robert Fulton's steamboat, the *Clermont* leaves New York City and arrives 32 hours later in Albany, the start of a commercial route. Also in New York City, water is carbonated with carbonic gas, bottled and sold as the first carbonated drink – the start of the soft drink industry.

And here in Central New York, Nelson becomes a Town and the first town meeting is held in Rufus Weaver's barn.

NORMAN ODELL CITIZENS OF THE YEAR

Byron Westcott	1996	Henrietta Ungleich	2002
Lois Stauring	1997	Carl Anderson	2003
Jeanette Magee	1998	Kay Tainter	2004
Celia Markowski	1999	M. Fay and Marge Lyon	2005
David Jones	2000	Carol Booth	2006
Lillian Felix	2001		

Quality Auto Care of Caz. Inc.
2808 Route 20 East,
Cazenovia, N.Y. 13035

Old Fashion Service with Current Technology
"We take the time to care"



Nationally Certified Technicians
For Your "Piece of Mind"

25 Years of

Dependable Auto Maintenance & Repair

New York State Vehicle Inspection

18 Month / 18,000 Mile Warranty

Air Conditioning Service

Vehicle Mileage Maintenance's

4 Wheel Alignment

Engine Computer Diagnosis

Call 655-2332 for Your Appointment

LEE MURRAY "A GOOD AND FAITHFUL PATRON" OF THE NELSON GRANGE #1271

by Everett Murray

Lee Murray was born in South Dakota in 1897 on a dairy farm. He married Lila Fish in Minnesota in 1916. Contrary to the "cry" in the 20th century, "Go west young man, go west", Lee and Lila came east. They purchased a 160 acre dairy farm in 1930 on Richards Road. That farm is now owned by the Sevier family.

Electricity was not available on this road until December of 1941. But, without all of the conveniences that electricity brought, Lee and Lila raised seven children – four boys and three girls. In those days there were not a lot of social activities to be enjoyed, therefore, it was only natural when asked to join the Nelson Subordinate Grange, that they were more than glad to become members. Some of the children also joined the Juvenile Grange.

The Grange afforded an opportunity to socialize with neighbors and friends two nights each month. The Grange was more than just a group of people working for the betterment of farm life – it was a social place where people could meet, converse, and enjoy each other's company. They also put on plays, dances, and gave an opportunity for local people to use the building for many other events and meetings of local interest.

The first election after joining the Grange, Lee was elected Gatekeeper. From there, he



Nelson Grange No. 1271.

passed all the chairs, and became Master in 1939, 1940 and 1943. Lila was placed in the Service and Hospitality committee, an office she held several years, as well as many other offices.

It was a rare occasion when the Murrays missed a meeting, even though they would often have to walk from the farm to Pugh's Corners (where Welsh Church Road and

Route 20 meet), which was exactly one mile. Richards Road was not plowed in the winter after the snow filled it in. The Murrays kept a car at Pugh's Corners for needed travel to Nelson and Cazenovia.

The Pomona Grange was the next step up from Subordinate Grange and was countywide. Lee became a member of

this Grange as well and eventually became Pomona Master, an office he held for three years. This grange only met once a month and was held in various Subordinate locations around the county.

While serving as Pomona Master, Lee started two new Subordinate Granges. They were in Perryville and Peterboro (Smithfield). Lee also went on to become a New York State Deputy, which entailed traveling around the state, to State Grange meetings. According to Dave Jones, Lee Murray was known as "Mister Grange".

Lee sold his farm in 1958 and moved to Sidney, NY, where he and Lila purchased a chicken farm and developed a large egg route. They eventually moved back to the local area, purchasing a small farm west of Morrisville, on Route 20. Here, they raised potatoes and other produce in season, to sell at the roadside.

The Nelson Grange hall is now the home of "Thing of the Past", an antique shop with hundreds of antiques to be seen and enjoyed. Mary DuSell purchased the building and saved it from the wrecking ball – which was about to happen. In doing so, she saved a local treasure.

First 200 Years: Continued from page 4

machinery were making it possible to farm many more acres. Neighbor bought out neighbor as new methods of farming became available. The Grange began to decline. It had reached its height of influence at the local level and was now nothing more than a social club. The Extension Service and the Farm Bureau were attracting more participation. Now 70+ years later, we can count the number of dairy farms in the town on one hand. We do have three sheep farms, an alpaca enterprise, several horse boarding farms and other equine enterprises and some specialty farms including market farming and apple growing.

The economic base of Nelson, once dependent on trees and agriculture, has become diversified in the 21st century. We now have a number of companies manufacturing electronic components and employing over 400 people. Retail outlets sell furniture and interior decorations, farm machinery and equipment, flowers and nursery stock, carpets and tiles, car parts, antiques, groceries and even salsas and salad dressings. We have a dental practice, animal hospital and Community Health Center. There are also dozens of service businesses in the town, many of them home-based. And those of us who live and work here still appreciate the natural environment which attracted those first settlers from Vermont.

Country Interiors

Slipcovers, Upholstery
Blinds, Shades, Fabrics



Deanne Nourse
2635 Erieville Rd, Erieville, NY
315-662-3216

Cazenovia Republican, 1903.

Our farmers are figuring to see what their cows yielded them in dollars last year. They range from \$45-\$73. E.L. Beebe had the highest record here at \$73 in 8 months from registered Holstein cows. I.H. Isaacs comes next for the same time with about \$60, some of his are grade Holsteins. D.D. Blowers comes next with his grade Holsteins at \$55. That looks better than \$25 or \$30 a few years ago when milk brought 50 to 60 cents per hundred.



Alfred Lord's steam engine, 1910, threshing at Hiram Westcott's farm.

The Cazenovia School of Ballet



2670 Rt 20 E
Cazenovia, NY
315-655-5509

NOTES ON THE ERIEVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT

By Denise Earl

Taken from "A Timeline History of the Erieville Fire District and Erieville Fire Department" written by Reginald Card in 1996 and revised in 2006 by Patrick Massett.

Prior to 1935, the hamlet of Erieville and the surrounding area had only an informal group of volunteers to help put out fires. Buildings at that time were constructed mainly of wood and with the use of candles and

was stored in Chauncey Hughes' barn. At just about the same time, construction started on the first firehouse, built on the corner of Georgetown and Eatonbrook Roads. You may recognize it now as a private residence.

The department had its first major fire on Dec 31, 1938. The Erieville Hotel, which was constructed of old and dry hemlock, was a total loss in spite of mutual aid from Cazenovia. Fifty-five years earlier, the previous

formed. The first truck was a refurbished house to house milk delivery truck. In 1978 this truck was replaced by a used carpet truck which was converted into a rescue truck. From these humble beginnings, the present rescue truck was one purchased in 1999 at a cost of \$197,000 dollars.

In 1974, the Department purchased the present firehouse; it was formerly a garage. They also purchased adjacent land to the east and have added additions to the original structure to serve as a community room and kitchen and to house equipment. Most of the construction work was done by volunteers.

In 1976, Jane Magee became the first female firefighter in the department and the second in the County, Margie Brody of Morrisville being the first. Interestingly enough, in the early 1970s, another Erieville resident was one of the first woman firefighters in Onondaga County. George Barrows, retired now from Barrow's Garage, was fire chief in Delphi Falls at that time and his wife, Miriam, was the first woman in their department to become an actual fire fighter. (Miriam

says that it wasn't the men who had a problem with this but some of the women didn't like this new development.)

The EFD has added many new upgrades to the vehicles through the years to aid their efforts. They practice many hours, keeping up to date with equipment, procedures, efficiency and safety; it is a dedicated effort. Carl Dilworth, who died in 2002, is remembered as the longest serving member of the department – over 50 years. In 1999, the communications room at the fire station was refurbished and named "The Carl Dilworth Communications Room". At the annual banquet in 2003, five generations of volunteering by the Smith family was celebrated.

The most recent extra project undertaken by the people of the fire department was the construction of a pavilion at the Erieville ball field in 2004. This area continues to be upgraded and is available for use by Town residents. The fire department is a real presence in our community.



The First Rescue Truck in 1972, a converted house to house milk truck.

kerosene lamps as light sources and wood and coal as heat sources, fires were common. Before the department was created, a bucket brigade was used and it did save one building. Often, however, the only course of action was to flee and try to save whatever human and animal life you could.

Petitions were circulated among the townspeople for the purpose of creating an actual fire department in 1935. In December of 1936, these were approved by the Nelson Town Board. The District was to be 50-60 square miles with Erieville at the center. Water buckets and a siren were ordered. Westley Sternberg was the first Fire Chief. The first truck with the ability to pump water was purchased in August of 1937; it cost \$4,000 and carried 90 gallons of water. The new truck

building on the site had also burned to the ground.

In 1959, a used fire truck was purchased for a tanker. Although it had other problems, it was a very good means of carrying water to a fire call. Prior to that, aviation fuel tanks were used to carry water. Large milk trucks owned by Frank Cook and Bill Bastian would come to the firehouse, unload all milk cans, load two empty fuel tanks per truck, go to the nearest available water source where pumps were set up, fill the tanks and then respond to the fire. Although this may not have been the fastest, it was the best they had at the time. Equipment has been continually updated since then. In 2003, a 2000-gallon tanker was purchased for \$162,000.

In 1972 the Erieville Rescue Squad was



500 gallon water capacity fire truck, Erieville Fire Department 1959.

B-17 CRASHES IN NELSON

A four-motored flying fortress (B-17) crashed three miles east of Cazenovia during a blinding snow storm on January 16, 1945. Of a crew of ten, one member was killed. The ship was on a training flight from Florida to Stewart Field, New York. Landing fields were closed in by weather. Finally the gas supply was so low it became apparent that the plane could crash and the "abandon ship" order was given. Eight crew members jumped with parachutes; all dropped with a radius of a few miles. Lt. Charles F. Blanke of St. Louis, Missouri was killed. He was the first one to leave the ship but landed on a hill on the A.W. Hughes farm. The hill is so high that the

parachute did not have time to fully open before he landed. Two crew members were at the controls and stayed with the plane which belly-landed on the farm of Edward Putnam. The plane struck deep snow, spun around, struck a hedgerow and bowled over several small trees. The survivors made their way to the Nelson Inn, their rendezvous point. Several Nelson residents remember rushing to the scene but State Police and MPs cordoned off the area as the plane had been carrying sensitive armaments.

From the *Cazenovia Republican* (Jan 1945) with additional information from John Roberts.



Cazenovia
Animal Hospital
 315-655-3409

Providing quality, compassionate care
 for pets since 1958

CELIA REMEMBERS...

by Celia L. Odell Markowski

I was born Nov. 22, 1919, daughter of Clarence and Elsie Seeley Odell, on what is now Chaphe Hill, about 1½ miles NE of Erieville, on a large farm. We lived in the tenant house.

My brother Ivan was born there in Jan. 1923, and then we moved to Syracuse for a year or so while Dad worked at Brown-Lipe-Chapin. My brother Arnold was born in March 1924. That summer we moved back to Erieville to a small house, now gone, next to Sarah Beebe, Lois Stauring's grandmother. Sarah "took in" washings, done on a washboard, of course, and she always had time to listen. In later years I wondered how she was able to accomplish so much.

I started school that fall when I was 5 years old. Catherine Elmer Pynn walked down from their farm near Jackass Hill with her younger sister Marie, who was also starting first grade. I joined them and we walked across the road to the school, which is now the Schoolhouse Apartments. Mrs. Nila Jones taught 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grades, and every morning before classes, we marched around the room a few times to Sousa marches played on the Victrola. That first year I brought home chickenpox, measles and whooping cough to my parents and brothers.

Before the end of the school year we moved to the house next to the blacksmith shop. There was a sidewalk across the street where we learned to roller skate and play hopscotch. Other games we enjoyed were "Hide 'n Seek", "Simon says", "May I", "Checkers" and "Old Maid".

My sister Mazie and brother Jesse were both born there. Dad and Grandpa Seeley were busy in the shop taking care of the horseshoeing and making buggy wheels in the rear. I still love the smell of wood shavings and sawdust.

Electricity came to town around 1930, and Dad bought our first radio which was a

long, narrow, box-shape with a lot of dials on the front and a horn-shaped speaker on top. Before electricity arrived, we used kerosene lamps for lighting. Our homes were heated with wood, for the most part, and usually the only heat that reached the upstairs was where the stovepipe went up through the floor or the stair door was left open.

In late spring of 1933, we moved back up to Chaphe Hill to the same house where I was born. By then Art Lapp was running the farm, and we lived there until early fall and then moved down to the farm on Tuscarora Road where Sue Clark now lives. No one had lived there for a few years, and there seemed to be an abundance of woodchucks. We ate quite a few, and contrary to what you might think, they are delicious when prepared properly and taste almost like chicken. That was a long, hard winter and my youngest brother, Vernon, was born in March of '34. I think after he was born was when I started being a caretaker and haven't stopped yet, I guess.

Mom made most of our dresses and some of the boys and Dad's shirts, but other clothes, shoes, etc. were bought from Montgomery Ward, Sears Roebuck, Alden's or Spiegel's catalogues.

We were taken down to school on a small, top-heavy-looking bus that "Fid" Stauring drove, when the weather was good, that is. If he couldn't make it through the snow in the wintertime, Dad or Art Hackney would take us and the neighbor kids to school with horses and sleigh. Glad those days are gone! Now we have large plows, good men to run them, and very seldom ever get snowed in. I can remember Dad shoveling that long driveway and sometimes counting every shovelful.

My folks always had a garden wherever we lived, and Mom canned the vegetables as well as beef, chicken, and pork. She also put fresh eggs in a crock down cellar and covered them with waterglass. I don't know what that was



Charlie Spaulding's Red & White store, Erieville.

made of. They bought other foods at Charlie Spaulding's Red and White store and Gaige's store on the corner where the Post Office is now. Gaige's carried just about everything in the line of food or dry goods.

We attended Sunday school and services at the Methodist Church in town where I still go. My Dad, who very much liked doing wood working, built the Memorial Cabinet in the vestibule and also the cup holder on the communion rail. I never belonged to the Grange, but Mom and Dad did and in later years they hosted roller skating for the kids in

that building. There was also Home Bureau and the still active Cornell Club.

Three of my brothers, Ivan, Arnold and Jesse joined the Air Force and Army shortly after graduation from High School. Luckily, they all returned home safely after WWII. Ivan decided to make a career of the Air Force. Sadly, he was killed in a plane crash in 1968 with only a year to go before retirement.

I think that I can honestly say, "I've had a pretty good life."

Cazenovia Republican, Dec 14, 1922

George Chambers, of Syracuse, was saved from certain death when his hunting friends pulled him from quicksand that had sucked him up to his neck. He and his party had been warned by local farmers that such treacherous spots existed in and near Nelson Swamp. They didn't let the matter bother them as they hunted the rest of the day.



Horse drawn corn cutter around 1942, Eugene Lyon and daughter.

**Congratulations to the Town of Nelson on your
Bicentennial Celebration!**

**The Pelco Component Technologies family of
Employees and Products**

PELCO
COMPONENT TECHNOLOGIES
Putting Power to Work

AIRTRONICS Timers and Controls <small>A Division of Pelco Component Technologies</small>	STK ELECTRONICS Film Capacitors <small>A Division of Pelco Component Technologies</small>	TRIMAX Circuit Protectors <small>A Division of Pelco Component Technologies</small>
FLEXCON Test Connectors <small>A Division of Pelco Component Technologies</small>	PELTEC Timers <small>A Division of Pelco Component Technologies</small>	

MINUTES OF THE FIRST TOWN MEETING, APRIL 7, 1807

(A true copy from the original book of minutes).

At a Town meeting holden at the Dwelling house of Rufus Wevers, the Seventh day of April 1807, according to an act of the Legislature of this State to Incorporate that part of Cazenovia called no. one into a town by the name of Nelson, James Greene, Esqr. was Chosen Moderator & James Hayden town Clerk pro. tem, John Rice & Isaac Bumpus was Chosen to Assist the Clerk and Moderator in Canvassing the Votes. Ebenezer Lyon was Chosen Supervisor and John Rice Town Clerk for the year Insuing, Jeremiah Clark, Simeon Marshall and Thadeus Hazelton was Chosen Assessors. Thomas Holdridge, Moses Boardman and John Knox was Chosen Commissioners of highways, David Fay & Moses Boardman was chosen overseers of the poor. Eri Richardson, Asahel Wood, Alvan Henry and Benjamin Bumpus was Chosen Constables and Alvan Henry chosen colector.

Voted that the constables shall give Bonds to the satisfaction of the authority of the

town. James Bacon and John Jackson Chosen pound keepers.

Overseers of highways:

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Elijah Daniels | 13. David Smith |
| 2. Daniel Butler | 14. Abraham Parker |
| 3. Silas Reeves | 15. Ephriam Cone |
| 4. Joseph Sims | 16. David Nichols |
| 5. Rufus Wever | 17. Daniel Cooledge |
| 6. James Annas | 18. Richard Green |
| 7. Benjamin Turner | 19. John Rice |
| 8. Uriah Annas | 20. Stephen Kingsley |
| 9. Robert Hazzard | 21. Dyer Mattison |
| 10. George Tibbits | 22. Francis Wood |
| 11. Eldad Richardson | 23. John Knox |
| 12. Jonathan Willington | 24. Worham Chapman |

Voted that the overseers of highways shall serve as fence viewers.

Voted that hogs, horses and sheep shall not be free commoners. . . .

Voted that Jeremiah Clarke shall be allowed ten Dollars for his Services for attending the Legislature to get this Town Incorporated.

Voted that the Town Clerk supervisor and assessors shall purchase books to keep the

town Records on at the expense of the town and also procure three Boxes to take the Ballot Votes in at the Election at the town's expense.

Voted that Sheep Rams shall not Run on the Common after the first day of September until the first day of January on the penalty of being forfit.

Voted that our next town Meeting be Holden at this place on the first Tuesday of next March according to the act of the General Assembly.

A True Record:

John Rice, T. Clerk, Erieville.



Rufus Weaver's house, pictured here, was too small for the first town meeting. The meeting was held in the barn across the road, April 7, 1807.

STONY POND

by David Penoyer

Off Jones Road, in the Town of Nelson, marked only by NY State Conservation Department signs, lies the entrance to a popular camp grounds and fishing area, Stony Pond. This State Forest consists of 1469 acres of hardwood and conifer forest and a 44-acre pond.

Nelson historian, Owen Evans wrote in the *Cazenovia Republican* (August 1961) that 3 1/2 miles of old abandoned town road extended west from Hughes Road near Payne Cemetery to Cook Hill. At one time, there had been a number of occupied farms along this road but they had been abandoned. Mr. Evans went on to discuss the S. Perry

Smith farm which had once been located along this road.

James Smith, Perry's father, arrived in Nelson from Columbia County about 1813. He immediately built a log house and began to clear the land. James had eight children by his first wife and two sons, James W. and John E., by his second wife, Susan Tackabury. When John was 10 years old, his mother died and his father, James, died a few years later. A half-brother, S. Perry Smith, cared for the two younger boys. Later, James W. Smith became a physician, and John E. Smith became a successful lawyer and a State Senator. John E. Smith is the editor

of an impressive history of Madison County published by the Boston History Company in 1899: *Our County and Its People, A Descriptive and Biographical Record of Madison County, New York*.

As time went on, much agriculture in the area was discontinued and, as conservation biologist G. B. Elliot wrote (ca. 1959) in *Stony Pond: An Adventure in Multiple-Use Planning*, "There is a great deal of public discussion these days about the need for more publicly owned lands and water for recreational use." Mr. Elliot was referring mainly to the need in Central New York for camping, hiking, and other outdoor opportunities for an increasing population with more leisure time. He felt that the Adirondacks and the Catskills were too far removed. He noted that thirty years before the State had initiated a program to retire submarginal farm lands at higher elevations and with poorer soils and "to develop these tracts into economic forest units through reforestation." These units became tracts for fish and game management as well as areas for public recreation, i.e. multiple use areas.

The Smith farm also included a large area of marsh land over which a fill of about three feet had been added for a road bed. In the center of the fill was a culvert through which a lively stream fed by springs flowed onward into Eaton Brook Reservoir. After a few years, a colony of beaver decided it was an ideal place for a pond, so they plugged the culvert and used the abandoned road for a dam. It flooded an area of about 20 acres. The pond attracted the notice of the Conservation Department which made plans to enlarge the area that became known as Stony Pond.

The pond was drained in 1959 and a survey made. Construction of a dam was started in June 1960 and completed in six weeks. Many stones and rocks hampered the operation of earth moving equipment and the rip rap was used to make the dam stronger, hence the name "Stony Pond". After the dam and spillway were built, the area was flooded. Four islands in the pond were thought to be ideal as nesting places for water fowl and the pond was stocked with trout as it was felt that the cool spring water in the pond would be ideal for that species of fish. Evans reported that wonderful catches of trout were obtained from the pond at first. However, the invasion of large populations of sunfish and bullheads soon adversely affected the trout in terms of food supply and living space. What had gone wrong? Apparently the shallow north end heated up quickly in the sun and that heated the whole pond. This was detrimental to the trout population as brook and rainbow trout are cold water species. Ultimately, the pond was repopulated with largemouth bass and pan fish and is once again a popular fishing spot but not for trout! As a means of retaining the freshness of the water, no gas powered motors are permitted so sportsmen must come prepared with an electric trolling motor or two oars and a strong back.

Camping is allowed at 15 designated campsites and a use permit is required between May 1 and September 30. Also available to the public is the 13-mile-long Stony Pond Nordic Ski Trail. The harvesting of various forest products including spruce pulpwood and hardwood saw timber rounds off the mandate of multiple use forest management.



David Hamilton homestead, left wing built in 1815. The property was sold to NY State in 1939 and is now part of Stony Pond State Forest.

ED AND ELEANOR PUTNAM, MY SURROGATE GRANDPARENTS

By Sonia Sadoff Davies

When I was born in the late 1940's, I had only one living grandparent whom I rarely saw. So it was that the Putnams, the couple next door who had no children of their own, became my surrogate grandparents.

My parents, my sister and I, plus a mélange of animals, moved into the 20 acre farm next door to Ed and Eleanor Putnam in 1954. Our visits next door became very frequent. We were given permission to ride the horses on their farmland: up the hill on the equipment trail, around the perimeter of the crop lots and through the tranquil yet vibrant wooded area alive with song birds. Dad sought agricultural advice and carefully watched the daily routine of rising at 4:30 am for milking and retiring by 9:00 pm. He observed the spring land preparation and planting and hay cutting. My Mother and Eleanor exchanged canning, freezing, and pickling tips.

I always tagged along when my parents made the Sunday evening visit. We had no television so my aim was to watch the Ed Sullivan Show. The adults talked over the week's events – which piece of equipment had broken down and where it had been taken for repair; which animal needed the vet and why, and what fashion was the hit this month in the Farm Journal. I sat on the ottoman with my eyes fixed on the TV set and a bowl of ice cream or popcorn wedged between my knees. Their dogs, Shep and Jack, sprawled behind me on the slip-covered sofa.

I remember the red barn being full of Holstein milking cows, heifers and calves. During the summer the "girls" moseyed way up on the side hill. Kevin, my future husband, used to listen for the bell of the

lead cow on her way back up the hill after late afternoon milking. Around 7:30 pm, the cows would be high enough for the sound of the bell to drift across the swamp. It signaled the closing of the farmers' day.

Two work horses, Jake and Prairie Pat had stalls in the crosswing. They were still useful even though machinery had been acquired over the years. Ed had purchased the first Farmall "M" tractor from Claude Lucas and had paid cash for it. He also had an Oliver crawler which currently sits in our pole barn awaiting an engine overhaul and new cleats. But the pair of horses, one black and one white, was still used to plow up the vegetable garden for the following spring. The garden was across the road from the big, two-story, white farmhouse. I still remember the rhubarb grown there for pies and the jumbo tomatoes.

Bright red geraniums circled the back porch moments after the last frosty morning in the spring. They continued to bloom all summer. At the end of September, they were brought inside to the summer kitchen where they continued to cheer visitors as they entered the house.

Shep and Jack would come over daily to stake out the territory that our dogs had also claimed. One gloomy winter afternoon, Jack bedded down in the snow under a cedar tree. I watched from the front steps as a mound of snow rose, shook and trotted away. It was Jack, the dark gray Airedale; I was convinced I'd seen a bear.

When I was away at college, Ed's health failed rapidly. Both Kevin and I came home to visit him one last time in the downstairs bedroom. Shortly after, we attended his graveside service. It was early spring

Continued on page 10



**Gentle
Dental Care**

Peter Fauth, D.M.D.
**GENERAL & COSMETIC
DENTISTRY**
For Adults & Children

655-8148

New Patients Welcome

2652 RT. 20 EAST, CAZENOVIA
1.2 MILES EAST OF McDONALD'S

THE ONE-ROOM SCHOOL

by Maxine Murray Lyga

Oh yes, I remember the Old Stone School,
Back in the little sixth grade,
When I was the oldest one in the room,
What an impression I made,
As I often relieved the teacher,
I taught the children in place of her,
And it made me feel so important,
Now I can often refer,
To the time I was a teacher,
In grades from one through six,
In that little old one-room school house
When we had the fire to fix.

Oh, that pot-bellied stove we all hated,
'Twas either too cold or too hot;
When it was cold in the morning,
We'd cuddle in a favorite spot.
With our coats and mittens on us,
We'd try to read our books.
We'd sit 'til almost noon time,
With no coats hung upon the hooks.
And then when the fire was blazing,
And the room was very hot,
We'd open up all the windows,
And the cold breeze hit the spot.

In the morning we'd pledge allegiance,
To our flag, red, white and blue,
And we'd all say, "Our Father";
'Twas the prayer that we all knew.
And then we'd march around the room,
To the step of a Sousa band,
And this would start our every day,
The three R's to understand.
I remember those days with fondness,
Tho', I attended just one year,
I learned more back in that old school,
Than on paper would ever appear.
For I learned how to handle children,
I learned what teaching meant,
Now I know that one-room school house,
Was really heaven sent.

Reprinted with the permission of Margie Lyga Sack from Poems from the Hills, Book 2 by Maxine Lyga, 1990.



*Pupils washing up outdoors at the Stone School, ca. 1925.
Left to Right, Eloise Hudson, Doris Pugh, Virginia Lyon, and Florence Judd.*



Old Stone School ca. 1921. Front Row from Left: Kenneth Owens, Royce Owens, Clarence Judd. Kneeling are Eugene Graves, Eloise Pugh, Merritt Lyon Jr., Virginia Lyon, Eloise Hudson, Irene Owens, Florence Judd, and Doris Pugh. Standing are Eugene Lyon, Kenneth Judd, Marian Hamilton, teacher Elizabeth English, Marcia Hamilton, Rosalie Card, and Allen Graves.

MILK ROUTE STORY

by Fay Lyon

Merritt Lyon, at a hardy 95 years of age, recalls a day when, in his early 20's around 1932 or '33, he met the challenges of picking up cans of milk to be delivered to the local milk plant. On a typical day he would start out about seven in the morning with his one-ton Ford stake rack truck with a load of clean empty cans. This truck was a new one which replaced the high geared one that he had bought from the former hauler. He knew that his new low geared one would be much more appropriate for the conditions that he had to face.

Leaving where he lived on his father's farm on present day Lyon Road, he headed east into the sun, taking the next right onto Erieville Road and then the next left onto the Old State Road heading for the furthest destination on Jones Road where Frank Hamilton lived, just north of Stony Pond and below the Knox Schoolhouse at that time. The schoolhouse is long gone now as well as Frank Hamilton's place. It seems that Frank was not convinced that upgrading the fire company in Erieville was in his main interest so he said that he would go out of business rather than pay taxes to finance it. The fire company won the day and Frank sold his place to the state, which at that time was buying up a lot of land around Erieville and west to the town line, because of the financial hardships the landowners experienced during the depression of 1929. So the house was moved east and the barn west and where Frank went we do not know.

After leaving off the empties for the next day and loading the spring cooled night's milk and the morning's warm milk, which he had to keep separate on the truck, Merritt headed back in the direction that he came in on. His next stop was at Chauncey Hughes' on the Old State Road across from Old State Auto Repair. Here he followed the same routine as before. The present day evidence of the farm only shows an old foundation in the shrubbery as this farm also went out of business.

Merritt quite often had obstacles to face that are not quite so prevalent in today's world. In winter for the most part the roads were not plowed. When he could not get to the farms to get the milk, the farmers would load it on wagons or sleighs and meet the truck at a specified place. At other times rutted roads presented their own unique problems.

Springtime always brought on a surge of milk, and he often would have two tiers of milk cans on the truck at that time. Cows always produced in abundance when they were turned out on fresh grass. Farmers milked their cows by hand and consequently did not produce an awfully large amount of milk on an individual basis. But in the spring, 4 or 5 cans a day was a large amount, and combined with all the milk picked up on the route, it meant that there was a surplus in the market, which usually resulted in a lower price per hundredweight.

Back on the road, the next place was Leonard Owens' who had a great spring for cooling the milk cans; the only problem was getting to them. The spring was in a low spot beside the road and the cans had to be lifted up high to get them on to the truck but Merritt remembers "that things usually worked out all right." Bud Omans lives there presently. The next stop would be Howard Blowers' on Richards Road, and then he would backtrack to Lyndon Jones' on the Old State Road at the foot of Richards Road. Continuing west the next stop would be at Chip Hughes'. This farm is now the Owen Gilmore place, better known as Johnny Appleseed Farm. Continuing west, Merritt would hit the Erieville Road and pick up milk at the Westfall Farm, which was located at the Caz College place, now owned by Brian Enders.

Backtracking a little, he would then turn down Stearns Road and pick up milk at Earl Miller's place where Ray Lyon lives now. Continuing south and getting back on the Erieville Road, he would pick up cans at



Eugene Lyon with his milk truck in 1942.

John Badertschers', Clinton Owens' Charlie Hudson's, and Gordon Chaphe's. Turning around and going up Judd Road, the truck would stop at the Hamilton place which at present is the Westfall Farm. This place is still producing milk and is using a lot of the productive land of the farms that historically produced milk in the past.

Going north, the next farm was Maurice Pugh's place now an active dairy farm run by John Werbela. Continuing on, the next stop was Earl Judd's place where Steve Westfall lives and then back on to Lyon Road and home to M.D. Lyon Sr.'s farm. There Merritt would put a few more cans on the truck before heading back east onto Erieville Road and towards Nelson to pick up Henry Lyon's milk where Don Balch lives now.

After turning west in Nelson, he headed for Cazenovia, turning left onto present day Thomas Road where he picked up milk at Irv Clark's and Henry H. Jones' (now Bradstreet's). His next stop was his

destination, the Dairymen's League Milk Plant in Cazenovia. There he waited his turn to unload his cans of milk. After the cans were all dumped and cleaned, he reloaded them at the end of a long conveyer, and was back home before noon. In the late 30's, Merritt sold this milk route to his brother Eugene Lyon.

Comparing times, we have seen 16 of the 18 farms on Merritt's route go out of business. Five are no longer producing anything, and for the rest, the land has been sold or leased to the few remaining large farms that have remained in the business. Surpluses still plague the industry, but now it is a year-round problem. Merritt was only one of several milk haulers who were doing the same thing all over the town. The 1935 census counted 250 farms in the Town of Nelson. Now, in 2007, there are less than five dairy farms in business.

My Surrogate: Continued on page 9

1969 – cold, dreary and wet. It was my first experience dealing with the loss of someone very dear to me.

Eleanor lived on alone in the house for many years. She attended our wedding in September 1970. A picture of her and Kevin's grandmother, Katy Boxell, is one of the treasured photos of that special day.

When the decision was made that Eleanor should sell the farm and much of its contents, it was also determined that she would live with her niece in the hamlet of Nelson. Kevin received a phone call from Eleanor at that time. She asked him to stop at her house, she needed to see him. Eleanor presented him with the bell from the lead cow. It is like a gold piece on our mantle. She passed away in her 90th year.

Now, Kevin and I frequently exchange comments about Mr. & Mrs. "P" – how they would drive to "Canastoty" or "Uticky" with Jack and Shep between them on the seat of the red 1949 Chevy pick-up truck, faded pink by years in the sun. Eleanor always wore her navy blue pancake hat with a big flower pinned to the side.

Every Christmas, Kevin asks me to create the peanut butter butterscotch fudge bars with nuts which Eleanor used to make. The ingredients and their proportions are still a mystery.

These two wonderful people of Putnam Road in the Town of Nelson, lived their entire lives in this area and left me and my family with deep, rich remembrances of them and the land upon which they lived.



Henry Roberts' blacksmith shop on Cherry Valley Turnpike in Nelson.

THE GRANGE: THE PATRONS OF HUSBANDRY

by Dorene L. Setliff

In 1867, a Minnesota farmer, Oliver Hudson Kelly, founded the National Grange or Order of Patrons of Husbandry in order to unite farmers the way unions had earlier united industrial workers. The Grange represented the views of agricultural communities and rural residents. These issues included railroad transportation of farm goods, rural schools, Rural Free Delivery, cooperative buying of seeds and fertilizer and many other economic issues which farmers faced in the late 19th and early 20th centuries including insurance and farm credit.

Besides rural economics, the Grange was also an important social force in rural communities and relieved the isolation that farmers and their families often felt. It emphasized the importance of family including women and children. Members were called Brother and Sister and women were accorded full membership. Youth at age 14 were eligible for membership as well, and many Granges also had a separate Juvenile Grange for younger children. As a result, the Grange became an important social organization for rural residents during the first half of the 20th century. By that time, membership was no longer limited to farmers.

Both Erieville and Nelson had active Grange organizations at one time:

- Erieville Grange #605, 1889-1903; #1252, 1911-1920; #1498, 1925-1980
- Erieville Juvenile Grange #534 organized 1949
- Nelson Grange #615, 1889-1900; # 1271, 1912-1989
- Nelson Juvenile Grange # 63 organized 1925

Erieville Grange 1498 and Nelson Grange 1271 became very active in the communities with up to 200 members before the drastic decline in membership that led to their demise in the 1980s.

Early Grange minutes, now stored in Cornell University Archives, give us a glimpse of the role of the Grange in rural lives. At Nelson meetings in 1890, important questions were debated by the members: "What causes the present depression among the farmers and dairymen?"; "Why do we not make as much money as was done before the war?"; "Is raising pork at present prices profitable?" Other questions for discussion included: fall plowing, the profitability of cows vs. sheep, free delivery of mail, women's suffrage (they were in favor), divorce laws, civil government, black raspberry crops, "the crow and his wrong doings" and interestingly enough, in 1898, how to protect birds from millinery.

In 1890, Nelson Grange formed a committee to purchase groceries from W. Richards Store at 10% added to the wholesale price. At one meeting, a motion was made to cooperatively buy seed "to be left with and divided by Bro. D.W. Jones. Bro. Bosworth agreed to draw the seed from Cazenovia." Erieville Grange at that time maintained a Grange store where members could buy canned goods, raisins, flour and dairy feed.

Social times were also enjoyed at the meetings. On June 11, 1890, in Nelson "the members enjoyed a harvest feast" and on July 30 a motion was made "to confer with the Erieville Grange in regard to holding a picnic next month."

Minutes from meetings of the second Nelson Grange indicated that the Grange won the first prize in its exhibit at the Morrisville Fair in September 1915. In 1916 grass seed and fertilizer were purchased for the use of the

Grange also succeeded in bringing rural families together in a social setting. By the 1960s and 70s however, rural life had changed dramatically. The telephone, better roads, television, fewer farms, the organization of other farm groups, more after school activities and many other changes resulted in less and less interest in Grange activities and most Granges disbanded by the end of the 20th century, including those in Erieville and Nelson.



Nelson Grange Officers 1916. Backrow, Marian Lyon, Savilla Case Walters, Madeline Francis, Tony Frantz, Rob Histed, Elmer Badertscher, Mila Jones, Fred Wyss, Lynn Jones; Front row, Edna Histed, Anna English, Tim Thomas (Master), Clara Badertscher Parker, and Mildred Williams Miller.

members. In 1918, in the midst of WW I, the Grange purchased a \$100 Liberty Bond, the members joined in singing "Over There" and the roll call response was "What I am doing for my country in this time of need." \$10.40 was sent to the state treasurer to go towards sending an ambulance to France. After the war, in 1919, it was moved that the "boys have the privilege of organizing a baseball team" and Brother Pangborn was appointed to see that "no smoking signs are put up before the next social."

During the years after WWI, plays and entertainments were being produced in Granges all over the county and then taken to other Granges as money making endeavors. Everyone had a chance to participate. The ladies of the Grange often put on large dinners for other community groups - Dairylea members, 4-H groups, local clubs. Refreshments were always served at the meetings and at the Feb 25, 1949 meeting, members in Nelson "voted . . . that the men help wash dishes when refreshments are served at the meetings" - an early stand for women's lib! Dances and parties were held at the Grange Hall and silent movies were even shown there in the early days.

The early Grange was founded primarily for economic and political purposes but the

DRIED APPLE PIES

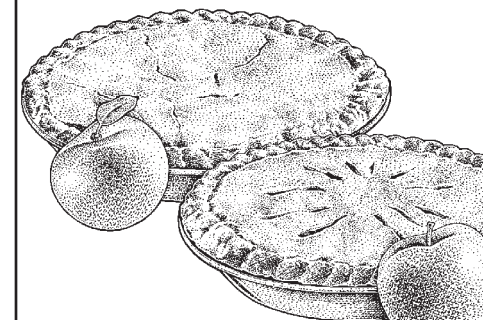
Author unknown

I loath! Abhor! Detest! Despise!
Abominate! dried apple pies.
I like good bread, I like good meat
Or anything that's fit to eat.
But of all the grub beneath the skies,
The poorest is dried apple pies.
Give me the toothache or sore eyes
In preference to such kind of pies
The farmer takes this gnarl-ed fruit
Tis wormy, bitter and hard to boot.
They leave the hull to make you cough,
And don't take half the peeling off.
Then on a dirty cord they're strung,
And from some chamber window hung.
And there they serve a roost for flies
Until they're ready for the pie.
Tread on my corns or tell me lies
But don't pass me dried apple pies.

DRIED APPLE PIE

- 1 ½ cups boiling water
- 1 ½ cups dried apple slices
- 1/3 cup sugar
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- ¼ tsp nutmeg
- 2 tbsp butter
- 1 unbaked two-crust pastry

Pour boiling water over dried apples and let soak for 3-4 hours. Add sugar, cinnamon and nutmeg. Fit half of pastry into a 9-inch pie pan and pour apple mixture into this. Dot with butter. Cover with remaining pastry. Bake 45 minutes at 350°.



Kay's Country Store



GROCERIES • ICE

A Dish of Hospitality &
So much more!

Erieville Rd, Erieville NY

Open 8 am-6 pm

7 Days a week

Teleflora • FTD



Brookside Greenhouses

Bedding Plants * Nursery Stock

Florist

Roger Olcott



www.brooksidegreenhouses.com

Phone • 315-655-3500

Fax • 315-655-2390

4004 Nelson Erieville Road, Cazenovia, NY 13035

Special Tributes

In memory of
Joyce and D. Fay Davies

In memory of
S.N. (Mike) and Jane Sadoff

In loving memory of my parents
Edward and Mabel Bachman and
their neighbors, my adopted
grandparents, Edward and
Lulu Jones.
From Betty McEvers

In memory of my Dad
Edward B. Stauring ("Shrimp")

In memory of
Harold and Eloise Smith

In Memoriam
John P. Davis, 1844-1912
A Civil War soldier from the
Town of Nelson, he owned and
operated the Paramount Cheese
Factory on Old State Road.
From Dorothy E. Howard, his
granddaughter

In memory of our parents,
R. Eugene Lyon and
Adelia Brooks Lyon

In memory of wonderful neighbors
Genevieve and Wells Davis

If you are interested in including
any "Special tributes"
in the next issue of this paper
contact Sonia Davies 655-3298
(10 words for \$5)



POTASH, THE FIRST INDUSTRY

by Ed Setliff

Much of written history is never learned or is easily forgotten, and so the story about the potash industry, which so vigorously propelled the demise of eastern forests by settlers in the 19th century, bears repeating. For one thing, it was America's first major chemical industry, a by-product of burning hardwood trees.

Potash is a black salt mixture of potassium carbonate mixed with other minerals such as caustic lye (potassium oxide + water) and was obtained by boiling down the water soluble portion of wood ash. The word potash later formed the basis of the elemental name *potassium* (wikipedia). During the Industrial Revolution in Europe and England during the 18th and 19th centuries, potash was in very high demand for use in making soap, degreasing wool, insuring color fast dyes in cotton cloth, and clearing impurities from molten glass. Also, North American Indians used ash as an early form of baking powder, and this technique was adopted by the new settlers. An improved potash salt mixture, so-called pearl ash or saleratus, was the consequence of potash being subjected to high temperatures which burned out carbon, thereby yielding a pearly white crystalline

residue. According to Henry M. Paynter (www.americanheritage.com), this more efficient process for purifying potash into pearl ash was described in 1790 by Samuel Hopkins in the first U.S. Patent.

Beginning in 1793, the first settlers of Madison Co. were able to purchase land from the Holland Land Co. for settlement, and their first task upon arrival was to build shelters and clear off the trees for farming. Logging bees were often organized wherein logs were piled high and covered with smaller limbs and brush. Upon drying, the pile was burned. Ashes served as fertilizer when worked into the soil. However, when the commercial market for potash developed, hard cash or supplies were to be had by selling or trading ash or potash. Always there was the fear of a heavy rain that might solubilize the ash before it was gathered. In the book *Discovering the Valley of the Crystals* by M. Paul Keesler (www.paulkeeslerbooks.com), large elms were mentioned as providing the best ash by yielding as much as 200 pounds of mineral salts from a single tree, enough when sold to buy two acres of land! The writer goes on to say that, "The potash industry became one of the most devastating,

win-win situations in history. Devastating because it destroyed millions of acres of forest in less than 25 years." In 1790, the ashes alone could be sold for \$3.25 to \$6.25 per acre. Judge William Cooper, in his *Guide in the Wilderness of 1810* remarked, ". . . it is a general observation that a man's profit[s] are never greater than at the time of clearing his lands." Potash was a principle commodity for export during these times, and the Erie Canal greatly facilitated transport to New York City. The 1845 New York census reported 738 asheries where potash was made. The Town once accommodated at least two asheries, and one in Erieville was associated with a store as was often the case. Large iron "kittles" used for boiling down wood ash are still to be seen in the area.

Potash production was a major endeavor for more than 50 years, but by the latter half of the 1800s the vast hardwood forest was mostly cleared, and the wood-to-potash industry disappeared. To put this in perspective, G.P. Ahern reported in his 1933 book, *Forest Bankruptcy in America*, that less than 1% of NY State's original forest of 33 million acres remained.



Recipe for French Cake from recipe book hand-written by David Case Lyon (1828-1860).
One gill equals 1/2 cup. Note use of saleratus (saleratus) as a leavening agent.

SKUNK HOLLOW

"The little village . . . commonly known as Nelson Flats . . . was early designated by the expressive if not euphonious name of Skunk Hollow, from the fact that the first skunk in this locality was caught here. As it was long supposed that there was not a skunk west of the Hudson River, this was regarded as a curiosity, and was boxed and sent to Cazenovia, no doubt to the great delectation of the cultured inhabitants of the lovely village."

From *History of Madison County New York 1784-1880* by James H. Smith, Published by C. Mason & Co., Syracuse, NY



Outing at Erieville Reservoir.

PHYSICAL THERAPY UNLIMITED of Syracuse, P.C.

Cazenovia 315-655-9559
2670 Route 20 East

Fairmount 315-487-8451
917 Granger Road

LET OUR FRIENDLY STAFF GUIDE YOU TO A HEALTHIER LIFE!

WHAT MAKES US SPECIAL: • 1 TO 1 Physical Therapist/Client Care
• Private Treatment Rooms • Attention To Individualized Care
• Hour Evaluations/Half Hour Treatments

WE TREAT CLIENTS WHO SUFFER FROM: • Neck & Back Pain
• Tendonitis/ Arthritis • Post Surgery • Car Accidents • Work Injuries
• Sprains/Strains • Neurologic Disorders • All Orthopedic Conditions

Call Now To Stop Hurting and Start Healing!

FOOD, FARMING, AND FAMILY: BEING A TEENAGER IN NELSON IN THE 1950s

By Kay Richards Mansfield

Nelson, NY was still primarily a farming community in the 1950s. Life was simple and revolved around food, farming, and family. Being a teenager in Nelson during those years was fun, and there were quite a few of us to enjoy the simple pleasures of growing up in a small, rural town. Most of the farming families knew each other well and being a teenager meant being an active member of the Methodist Church, the Grange, and the local 4-H club, all organizations that were involved in one way or another with food and family and farm life.

Being active in the Nelson Methodist Church was more than simply attending Sunday School each week. It included singing in the choir, which required a rehearsal one night out of every week to learn the music for the Sunday service. Then one had to actually attend the service after Sunday School to sing the pieces we'd rehearsed. Sitting in the choir loft meant that we were to pay attention to the sermon and not giggle or pass notes to each other. Sometimes these rules were transgressed, and sharp, disapproving looks were shot our way by our parents sitting in the congregation.

The same crowd of teenagers who sang in the choir also attended youth fellowship on Sunday evenings. These evenings were supposed to promote our spirituality, but

they were also fun social gatherings for the local teenagers.

During the year, the church often sponsored suppers as fund-raising events. The local teens always attended these suppers – not just to eat, but as waiters and waitresses to help serve the food that the parishioners had prepared. The teens were usually also drafted to help with the clean-up after the suppers, so that an additional opportunity to socialize was provided.

Events at the Grange Hall were mostly social and lots of fun. I'm sure there must have been meetings there too, but I remember only the social events that were packed with teens, small children, and parents – neighbors coming together for a good time.

Most memorable were the birthday suppers. At least twelve tables were decorated in themes to match events that occurred during each month – red, white, and blue with small flags on the table for July and pumpkins and harvest colors for November. There was a birthday cake on each table, baked by the farm women who were great cooks and bakers.

There were square dances at the Grange Hall too, with live music – usually a fiddler and a pianist and a good caller. Everybody danced – young, old, teenagers.

Farm life was hard, but teenagers were able to reap rewards for their help through

the local 4-H club. Boys were usually involved with dairy animals that they raised and groomed for showing at the 4-H Round-up and, if they were lucky, the Madison County Fair at Brookfield or even the NY State Fair in Syracuse. Some boys also had vegetable gardens and exhibited the produce from their gardens at the fairs.

Girls were involved in things domestic – cooking, baking, and sewing – techniques that they learned and honed at weekly meetings at the 4-H leader's home. After pledging “our heads to clearer thinking, our hearts to greater loyalty, our hands to better service, and our health to better living for our club, our community, our

country and our world,” we settled down to learn new skills. Some of us modeled our sewn creations at the 4-H Round-up fashion show, and some items and baked goodies were selected for exhibition at the State Fair. I remember presenting a demonstration at the State Fair with a fellow 4-er on how to make “party ribbon sandwiches.” I confess I even made and served some at an event years later!

Life in Nelson in the 1950s was fun and very social. People worked hard on their farms, but they had a good time together at dances and church suppers and 4-H Round-ups. It was a grand time to be a local teenager!



Union School Erieville in early 1900s.

HAPPY 200TH TOWN OF NELSON



From

Assemblyman

Bill and Jeanette Magee

LET'S CELEBRATE!

CALL US FOR OUR EVERYDAY LOW PRICES ON

- Fuel Oil
- Kerosene
- Farm Diesel
- On and Off Road Diesel
- Unleaded Gas
- Super Unleaded Gas

WHY NOT MAKE US YOUR ONE STOP SHOP?

Heating-Plumbing-Electrical-Septic Tank Pumping
Dump Trucks-Septic Tank Systems-Water Pumps
Diesel Fuel-Gasoline-Kerosene-Fuel Oil



AUTOMATIC UTILITIES, Inc.
2830 Rte. 20 East, Cazenovia, NY
655-9500 or 655-3841 Day or Night

NOTABLE NELSONIAN: CROSBY GAIGE

Time Magazine, March 21, 1949

"Died: Crosby Gaige, 66, witty bibliophile and gourmet who found time to indulge in his hobby of printing fine limited editions (Joyce, O'Flaherty, Conrad) and writing books (*Crosby Gaige's Cocktail Guide and Ladies Companion, Footlights and Highlights*) in addition to coproducing such Broadway hits as *Coquette* (starring Helen Hayes, 1927); in Peekskill, NY."

One important detail was omitted from this obituary notice: Crosby Gaige was born in Nelson and grew up here. He was always loyal to his birthplace which he called Skunk Hollow.

His grandfather was A.T. Gaige, a name which appears on early maps as a resident of the village of Nelson and owner of a cheese factory. Crosby's father George joined the Union Army during the Civil War and spent some time in an army hospital in Virginia. A southern girl of 16, who brought oranges to the hospital, caught his eye, and when he was discharged, they married and came north to Nelson. She brought with her 22 silk dresses "a memory of former opulence" and those dresses appeared in clothing for the Gaige children for many years. Three daughters were born to the young couple: Myra James, Eva Adele and Georgia. In 1882, Crosby was born. Originally named Roscoe Conklin Smith Gaige, he changed his name to Crosby, a family name, as soon as he was of age.

Growing up in Nelson, Crosby had wonderful memories of food: "I grew up with the smell of ginger cookies baking, with the fresh clean smell of bread, with the excitement of mince and pumpkin pies and with the tantalizing aroma of salt pork being fried crisp." Crosby would become a gourmand and wine connoisseur, but as a middle-aged man he would state that "fried salt pork . . . creamy milk gravy and flaky boiled potatoes . . . sound commonplace, but I still would match such a meal against a platter of *moules mariniere* at the Ritz in Paris."

As a young boy, Crosby became the local correspondent for the Syracuse paper when he reported the powder factory explosion in Delphi (on the only phone in Nelson at Wiley Richards Store) and continued to report Cazenovia news while attending Cazenovia Seminary. After graduation in 1899, he sold books door to door in southern New York, earning \$252, enough to start college at Columbia in NYC. He left Nelson on a bicycle, took up residence in a boarding house in Brooklyn, and thus started a career that led him to mingle with many of the great names in publishing, theater, politics and industry.

He still came home to visit his family in Nelson and became a good friend of carpenter Loren Barnes. After Loren died and was buried in Elmira, Crosby got permission to move the body back to Nelson, provided a church funeral and saw that he was buried next to his wife Maria in the Nelson Cemetery.

Crosby quickly became a part of the theater world, writing and producing plays. He came to know Helen Hayes. He played croquet for \$2500 a game with Harpo Marx and Alexander Woolcott, a frequent guest at Crosby's Westchester estate, Water Hill Farm. He knew Ruth Gordon, Irving Berlin and George and Ira Gershwin. The theatrical greats, Jerome Kern and George S. Kaufman were his friends.

He also became involved in publishing.

He knew and published special editions of works by Virginia Wolff, Lytton Strachey, James Joyce, Aldous Huxley, George Bernard Shaw, J M Barrie of Peter Pan fame, and Carl Sandburg.

As he continued his success in the theater and in publishing, he admitted "I knew I was making more money that I was entitled to" but those were boom days in the U.S. until the stock market crash in 1929.

Over the next 20 years, Crosby found himself in and out of the money, always landing on his feet with the help of his friends. In 1936, he bought a huge collection of patent models which had been accumulating in Washington since the first patent laws had passed. Storing them proved too expensive and he sold them in 1940. (note: The collection has been broken up, resold and scattered since then but Alan Rothschild in Cazenovia owns many of the models.)

Around this time, he got to know Eleanor Roosevelt; he sent her herbs from his country garden. He was even invited to the White House for dinner and an overnight stay. This was the second president he had met; as a young boy his mother had taken him to the White House to meet then president Benjamin Harrison from whom he was sure he caught the measles.

In 1937, at age 55, Crosby found himself in financial ruin. He moved upstate to his farm and "gathered strength to start life anew". His plan was to go into the "business of food and feeding". In 1939 he wrote the official cookbook of the New York Worlds Fair and went on to write a still popular and oft quoted book, *Crosby Gaige's Cocktail Guide and Ladies Companion*.

Crosby continued to be active in many enterprises, particularly those at his farm, including publishing, cooking, distilling perfume from flowers, and growing herbs and spices until his death at age 66.

(Except for the *Time Magazine* death notice, all of the above information including quotes was found in Crosby Gaige's autobiography, *Footlights and Highlights*, published by E.P. Dutton, NY in 1948.)

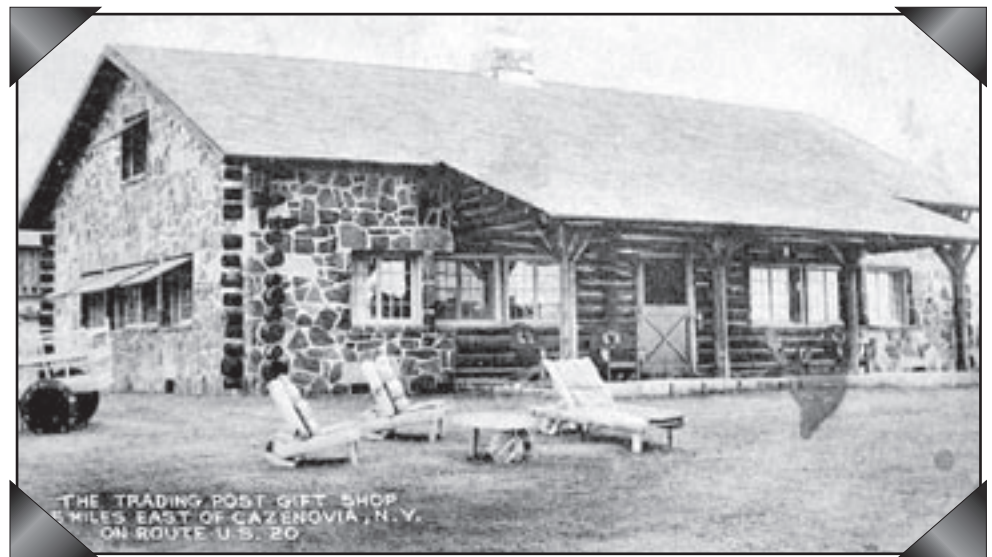


Erieville postmen and their cars.

Cazenovia Republican, 1918

NELSON MORE THAN DOUBLES ITS QUOTA FOR LIBERTY BONDS

A soldier home on furlough brought home the truth of war that many of us had never heard before and the need for every citizen to help by investing in Liberty Loan bonds. When a house to house canvas was completed, the sum of \$11,000 was raised to purchase the bonds, doubling the quota of \$4800.



Do you remember the Trading Post on Rt. 20 east of Nelson?

TRADING
OF THE
PAST

ANTIQUES
Open Thursday, Friday and Saturday
Telephone 315-655-4884
Grange Building, Nelson, NY

MARQUARDT

**CONGRATULATIONS TO
THE TOWN OF NELSON –
CELEBRATING 200 YEARS!**

Marquardt Switches, Inc.
2711 Route 20 East
Cazenovia, New York 13035
(315) 655-8050
www.switches.com

NAMING NELSON AND ERIEVILLE

By Dorene L. Setliff

The Town of Nelson was named after the British Admiral, Lord Horatio Nelson who defeated the French fleet of Napoleon at the Battle of Trafalgar. On October 21, 1805 the French and Spanish fleets consisting of 33 ships, set sail from Cadiz, Spain. Nelson's fleet of 27 ships met them at Cape Trafalgar in southwestern Spain. Nelson, in his dress uniform an obvious target for a sniper, stood on the deck of his ship, *HMS Victory*, and was hit by a bullet in the shoulder. He retained consciousness for 3-4 hours but died soon after the battle ended with British victory. His final words were "Thank God I have done my duty." According to legend, his body was preserved in a barrel of brandy, taken back to England and afforded a state funeral on January 9, 1806. In death, Nelson became a national hero in the United Kingdom. He was also a hero to the early settlers of our town which was named after him. The hamlet settled along what is now route 20 was originally called "Nelson Flats" for obvious reasons.

Not everyone was pleased with the name "Nelson". According to former town historian, Owen Evans: "History that has been handed down through the generations by word of mouth says that some objected to the

name and one Nicholas Jenks, a land-owner who had been a soldier in the Revolutionary War, was so disgusted with the name Nelson, that he declared he would not live in a town named after a British Officer. He made good his vow, sold his property and moved to Alleghany Country."

The name "Erieville" is somewhat harder to trace. In 1796, five Richardson brothers, Eldad, Eri, Lemuel, Asa and Benjamin, all single, came from New Hampshire and settled where Erieville now is. Erieville may have been named after Eri Richardson, a well-respected citizen of the town. When the Syracuse and Chenango Railroad had a station in Erieville, the stop was first called "Eritown" in order to distinguish it from "Earlville". The word "Erie" is actually the name of an Indian tribe which lived on the southern shore of Lake Erie. It is a French modification of an Iroquian word, *Eriehronon*, meaning "long tail" which refers to a panther. In 1680, the last group of Erie Indians surrendered to the Iroquois. "Lake Erie" is certainly derived from this Indian name but is "Erieville" derived from "Lake Erie"? The name "Erieville" remains somewhat of a puzzle.

A NELSON LOVE STORY

By Anne (Fitzsimmons) Kelley

From *The Morrisville Leader*
(1939 or 1940)

In the year 1833, John James of Nelson began calling on Almira Truesdale, but it seems there were complications in the form of another suitor. John James wasted no time and wrote the following, rather business-like letter:

"Nelson, June 17, 1833

Miss Almira:

Unquestionably you will be surprised on receiving this, tho I presume not too much but what you will soon condescend to read its contents. Since I commenced calling on you I have been informed by a friend that you are engaged to Mr. Woodworth-if so I have not any more to say nor neither do I wish to trouble you by calling. But if so is not the case permit me to ask if you are willing to accept and consider me as your intended. Your acquaintance with me is such that I deem it needless to write anything in favor of myself. I therefore will but say that I do sincerely hope that the above question will be agreeable to your wishes. Please think of this seriously for I assure you that I have, and write me an answer as soon as you can conveniently.

Yours respectfully,

John James"

Miss Almira did consider him "her intended", and they were married in October. He and Almira bought the old drover's inn in Nelson (now owned by Bill Magee) in 1874 from Myron Hutchinson. They and their son William turned the place into a sort of factory for the manufacture of creamery supplies and tinware. Their grandson, Bryan James, continued to own the building which also was used as the Nelson Post Office and later became a feed store and an antique store.

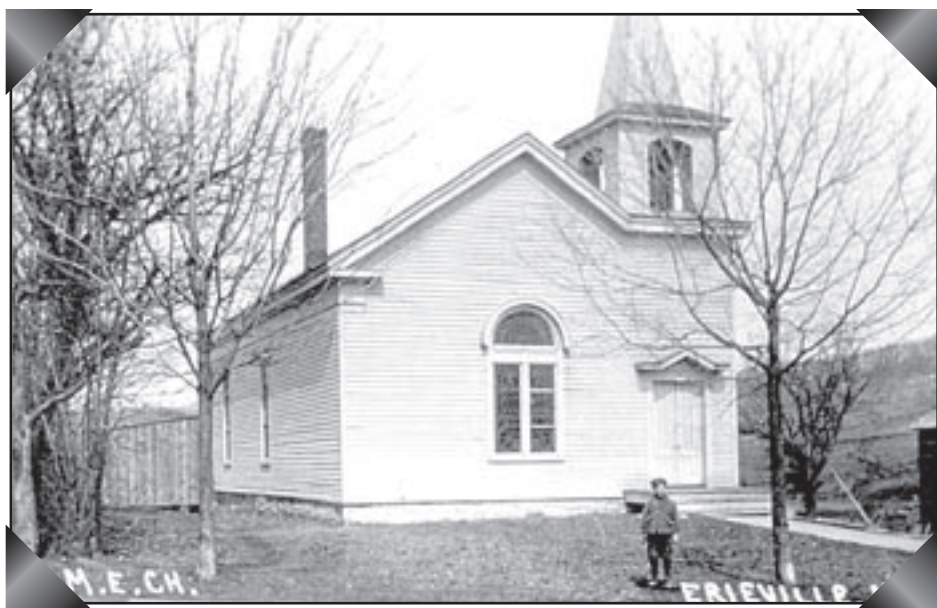
STEVE SUHEY, ALL-AMERICAN

Post Standard, Feb. 1948

All-American guard Steve Suhey of Penn State's unbeaten Eastern champion football eleven, was the man of the hour the last week in this town [Cazenovia], to which he came back in triumph for a testimonial dinner, given by his old school mates, teammates and neighbors. Steve, the first native Central New Yorker to win All-America recognition in many years, enjoyed being among old friends who presented to him a new 1948 automobile which he will use to commute between Cazenovia and State College Pa., where he is a senior. Steve usually hitch-hiked home. He will play professional football with Pittsburgh in the National League next fall. Son of Mr. and Mrs. Michael Suhey [of Nelson], he is one of four children. With savings from his military service while overseas, he helped pay off the mortgage on the farm of his parents and sent a prize bull home to the old homestead.

*Cazenovia Republican,
January 14, 1976*

It was round-up time at Bill Steffan's Side Hill Farm, Erieville, when a shipment of 65 registered Poled Herefords arrived by truck from Roundup, Mont. and Bridgeport, Neb., last week. The nine-month-old new arrivals bring the herd to 208 breeding cows. They will feed on a combination of alfalfa and baking soda for a few days, then switch to ensilage.



Methodist Episcopal Church in Erieville, built in 1850, burned in 1931.

*Did you enjoy this journey
down memory lane?*

We encourage suggestions, contributions and especially old pictures which we can copy and publish in our next issue.

Please contact Dorene L. Setliff at 655-2185

or Denise Earl 662-7621.

Advertisers can contact Kevin Davies at 655-3298.

Congratulations

Town of Nelson

The Trush Family & Businesses

