



Township of Sheldon Historical Society & Schoolhouse Museum Newsletter

Volume 1 Issue 4

Aug. 2012

"An update on our progress as a Society and a Chartered Museum & "A new look at old news from our town."

Sheldon Historical Society Officers Board Members & Curators

10/ 2011 - 10/2012

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Meetings are held the third Thurs. of the month through Oct.

Nonmembers are also welcome to attend. We will be open

*from 1:00 to 4:00 on Tues. June through Sept., by appointment, or by chance when we are working at the museum. Watch for the **OPEN** sign on the porch railing.*

Town of Sheldon Historian- Barb Durfee

Phone 585-535-7322 or email SheldonHistorian@aol.com

Welcome new members since last newsletter1:

Patricia Daniel, Bob Kehl, Yvonne Darts, Ted George, Edward Kuster, Joan Milligan, Judy Strobele.

We hope you enjoy the fourth issue of our quarterly newsletter as we conclude our first volume. Please let us know what you would like it to include. For those of you who would like it electronically only please email us.

Newsletter: Compiled by Mary Ann Metzger and Jeanne Mest with the help of various members of the Town & Society. (For submissions, corrections, and additions please email us or leave a message.)

From Jan.1951 Newspaper:

Jim Konstanty, the Philadelphia Phillies' ace relief hurler, pitched himself to "a comfortable increase" in salary. Big Jim signed his 1951 contract yesterday, putting him in the higher baseball salary bracket. He made about \$10,000 in 1950 and guesses of his new contract ranged up to \$25,000. Jim was named the National League's most valuable player and was picked athlete of the year in an Associated Press poll. He is a native of Strykersville, NY and lives in Worcester, NY.

Mark your Calendar:

Historical Society meetings on **Aug 16, Sept.20, and Oct. 18, 2012** at the School House Museum.

Town board meeting will be held **on Aug. 21, 2012**, at the School House Museum. All are welcome.

The fall dinner sponsored by the Wyoming Co. Federation of Historical Societies will be held on **Oct. 16, 2012**. Greg Kinal will speak on the War of 1812. More will be announced later.

Our Fair booth at Wyoming Co. features Reisdorf Bros. 100th Anniv.

Eighty Years Ago in the Town of Sheldon



Attention: Bicentennial Banners are available to purchase.
Contact Elaine Almeter 585-457-8143

Museum Displays for 2012 are:

- School class room in the 1918 era.
- Herrmann Philco radio and T.V. display
- Depression glassware compliments of Carol Kehl
- Civil War display in commemoration of 150 Anniversary
- Local farm related displays & History
- Sheldon band display.
- Play ball with Lawrence Lefort - baseball memorabilia.
- George Immigrant trunk with history
- New picture added to our George reunion collection.
- Strykersville Baptist Church display.

School News

The society is looking for information, pictures and stories on the rural one room school houses in Sheldon. At one time there were 15 in the town. Please, if you have attended, send us a memory or story, help in our quest to preserve this bit of history.



Memorial to "Old Varysburg Schoolhouse"
(From Feb. 1972 newspaper)

In a short time the old wooden Varysburg schoolhouse will be no more as workmen have begun to dismantle it. Many of us, young and old have very fond memories connected with our Alma Mater and hate to see it go.

I am sure there are many former Varysburg residents and those still living here, will remember the good old days at Sheldon No 16 or Varysburg Union. We of the older group recall how we sat around the big round oak stoves to keep warm while having classes and eating from our lunch pails. We recall such wonderful teachers as Peter Cole, Millard Embs, Victor Blum, Edson Hathaway, Anna Paige, James McLaughlin, Anna Paige, Florence Orr Hodge and Clarence Flint. Two years of high school were taught for several years, which enabled many students to secure a high school diploma, without too much expense of attending high schools elsewhere.

The younger generations will recall such teachers as Julia Bauer, Grace Wheeler, Marion McQuilkin, Kathryn Maher, Sophia Zwetch, Ardith Mengs, Bethrene Ahl and Beatrice Keenan.

Young and old alike still talk of the two hour Christmas programs which were held with after school rehearsal from Thanksgiving to Christmas. Parents and friends for miles around came to fill the rooms to overflowing. Pupils would make their own Christmas decorations. The older boys would make a trip to some farmer's woods and bring back a large tree which stood in the corner, reaching to the ceiling. Arbor Day brought the annual trip to the woods to gather wild flowers and clean the school yards and windows. I am sure if the old walls could talk, they could tell many pleasant stories. So it's goodbye to our old Alma Mater.

(see poem opposite - written in 1972 newspaper adjacent to this article)

From 1902 Wyoming Co. Atlas

ORCHARD PARK STOCK AND DAIRY FARM

Its original settler was Curt Plant, thence to John Fauldin. The present owner is Nicholas Bartz. P.O. Strykersville, New York. It consists of 208 acres, the location and surrounds of which are considered second to none in the town. It is adapted to dairying, grain raising and fruits of different varieties, while general stock raising is a special feature. Its present market facilities are at North Java on the B A. & A.R.R., four miles distant; a nearer market, one and one-half miles distant, on the electric road, will soon be in competition. The buildings consist of a two story frame residence with wing, located on the west side of the road from Strykersville to Straub's Corners and within one-fourth of a mile of school privileges. Other buildings consist of five barns conveniently arranged for stock, hay, grain, etc. There is a brook located on the southwestern part of the farm and wells which supply water to all buildings by windmill power.

Mr. Bartz was born in 1846. Married Miss Mary Redding in 1880. They have eight children living; six boys and two girls. He may well be termed an independent Democrat; is a trustee of the Catholic Church, and is a liberal citizen, both in the support of church and school. In addition to the usual products, a large quantity of maple sugar is manufactured each spring. Mr. Bartz also buys and sells fertilizers at wholesale and retail.

TRIVIA: Income tax, along with many other taxes imposed during the Civil War, was repealed after 1865 because the government simply had no need for the extra revenue. The majority of federal income came from taxes on tobacco and alcohol, which were hot commodities at war's end.

Farm Humor:

It seems a farm boy accidentally overturned his wagon-load of corn. The farmer who lived nearby heard the noise. "Hey Wilmer!" the farmer yelled. "Forget your troubles. Come in and have a bite with us. Then I'll help you get the wagon up." "That's mighty nice of you," Wilmer answered. "But I don't think Pa would like me to."

"Aw, come on," the farmer insisted.

"Well okay," the boy finally agreed, and added, "But Pa won't like it."

After a hearty dinner, Wilmer thanked his host. "I feel a lot better now, but I know Pa is going to be real upset."

"Don't be foolish!" the neighbor said with a smile. "By the way, where is your Pa?"

Wilmer replied, "Under the wagon."

Alma Mater Song for Varysburg Union School

Author unknown

*On the sunny slopes of cobble, stands our school so dear
To its site we like to hobble, but we leave in fear.*

CHOUUS:

*Thine shall ever be, far above the Tonawanda
Flowing thru the town, reared against the arch of heaven*

Looks she proudly down.

Our strong band can ne'er be broken, Found in V.U.S.

Far surpassing wealth unspoken

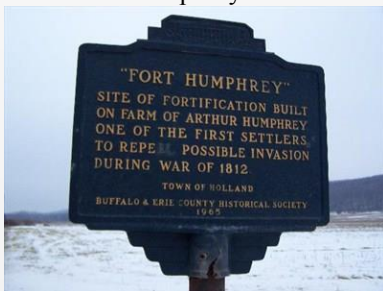
Sealed by Friends' test.

THE STORY OF OLD FORT HUMPHREY

After reading the heartbreaking story of Israel Read in the War of 1812 in our last issue, I wanted to know more about this brave man and his family, and while looking through the Read Genealogy book at our Sheldon Historical Museum, I was intrigued by what I found. As we know, Israel Read brought his family to Willink in 1811 and settled high up on the crest of Vermont Hill near **Old Fort Humphrey**, about three miles west of South Wales ... Wait, what were they talking about? I never heard of Fort Humphrey. Has anyone? I had to know.

To find the answer required a side trip into the history of our neighboring town of Holland. I learned that the first portion of the Holland area to be settled was the northern edge, known as the "**Humphrey Valley**". Holland's first settlers were Arthur Humphrey, Abner Currier & Jared Scott, who came from Vermont with slow moving oxen and a covered wagon in 1807. They built the first log cabins in the town & were soon joined by other pioneers, including Israel Read. Many were veterans of the Revolutionary War. They lived along the Humphrey Road, which ran from the present Route 16 up to the crest of Vermont Hill.

During the War of 1812, the settlers became concerned about the British & Indian invasions, as they heard of the savagery of the war. In the summer of 1813, they joined together and built a stockade enclosing an acre of land on the Arthur Humphrey farm. This was about six tenths of a mile east of the present Route 16, following the now abandoned Humphrey Road, stopping about 50 feet from the railroad tracks, forming a triangle. The fort was built of 600 to 700 logs, cut into 15 foot lengths and set upright side by side about three feet apart in the ground. Moats & ditches were dug around the fort, with water being supplied by the Hill Creek. Farmers used to talk about an old well they believed had been dug to provide water. Loop holes were cut in the standing logs for muskets & rifles. The battle-wise veterans of the Revolutionary War considered it a strong enough fortification to repel a moderately sized force. An 1884 account refers to the Humphrey farm as the "**Fort Farm**".



Local legend says that the early settlers could see the flames of Buffalo burning in December of 1813, as they stood atop Vermont Hill. Despite their fear, it must have been a comfort to know they had planned ahead & were ready to protect their families if the danger came any closer.

Fort Humphrey never actually had to be used as a fort. In later years it was dismantled & the logs were used to build various area barns. Today there is no physical evidence of the old fort. Only this historical marker remains.

Ralph Dibble wrote in an article in The Buffalo News, "**Fort Humphrey may be a nearly forgotten footnote in history** ... But one area historian, Miss Norma Fisher, thinks it is possible that other neighboring towns had counterparts to Fort Humphrey at that time, forts whose memory virtually disappeared into the mists of their past. Old Fort Humphrey's only physical reminder is the historical plaque along the east side of Route 16, two miles north of the hamlet of Holland. There aren't even plaques to recall other town forts. But Miss Fisher is sure they existed."

After Israel Read's death in the battle of Buffalo, his son brought his body home in an ox-cart and they buried him in the **Humphrey Cemetery**, also located on the east side of Route 16. Alongside him are other hardy frontiersman who also died while protecting their families; Veterans of the War of 1812, and Soldiers of the American Revolution. Many brave men were laid to rest in this historical burying ground. A quaint old tombstone was erected for Israel Read, with this inscription: "In memory of Mr. Israel Reed, who was slain by the savages in the battle fought at Buffalo, Dec. 30, 1813; Aged 45 years. Oh from thy kindred thou was torn, and to the grave untimely borne; Oft as remembrance brings us near, Affection will drop a tear."

Contributed by Jeanne Mest, Archival Curator

Sources for this article include: The Read Genealogy The Town of Holland 1818-1993 175th Anniversary History Book "Holland's Fort Humphrey Survives as Just a Footnote in History", By Ralph Dibble, Buffalo News, March 26, 1974

A Tribute to our military:

Sgt. Leon W. George

Reported Killed in Action

Word was received Monday by Mrs. Julia Graff George of Johnsonburg that her son, Sgt. Leon W. George, 67th Armored Regiment, was killed in action in France on **July 15, 1944**. Sgt. George was one of the first Selective Service groups to go from Wyoming County in January 1941. He left for the European theatre of operation in October 1942. He took part in three North African campaigns and returned to England after the capture of Tunisia.

He went from there with his regiment to France about July 5, 1944. A brother, Francis Willis George is also in France at present, he left for overseas August 1, 1944 but they were unable to contact each other.

Sgt. George was born Dec. 13, 1914, son of the late Joseph and Julia Graff George. He leaves beside his mother, one sister, Mrs. Edith Stoll of East Aurora and six brothers, Norbert, Sgt. Francis Willis, Carl, Flight Officer Nelson, Darwin and Vincent, one brother, Clarence, predeceased him in death. Memorial services were held at St. Cecilia's Church at Sheldon, Thursday morning, Rev. George Koch officiating. Mass was also sung for him at Varysburg R.C. Church, Rev. Michael Lutz officiating

Attention: Did someone in your family serve in the military or are currently in active duty? Please submit their story, picture and where and when they served, our military history will not be complete without it. Any information however small is welcome.

138 Years of Development and Material Progress of Wyoming County "Early 1800's to WW II"

George Hoy starts commercial cheese factories in Johnsonburg

(Taken from Jan. 1, 1941 Issue of "The Sheldon Democrat.")

(By F.M. Benham)

From the beginning of the settlement in Wyoming County in 1803, then the southern end of the newly created county of Genesee, the greatest necessity of most of the settlers was immediate money. Fish and game for food were quite readily obtainable but quick cash could only be had by selling wood ashes at 8 to 10 cents per basket of one and one half bushels, if transported to Rochester. Trails were so miserably impassable and ashes were so bulky that much work was required for little return so local asheries were set up. Ashes were "boiled down" and concentrated "black salts" were bartered or sold for cash. In the haste for money, many settlers passed up good land for parcels, practically unproductive, but where certain trees grew whose ash returned a somewhat better price.

By converting the forest into ashes, land became partially cleared, many stumps remained, but land was broken between the stumps and grain planted. It was not that the early settlers could not swing a cradle that sickles were greatly used. It was due to the stumps being so close together that a cradle could not be swung to advantage. Grain could be sold for cash at Buffalo at Buffalo, Rochester, Honeoye Falls and Albany. Again grain was so bulky for profitable long hauls over difficult so called roads, and distilleries came into existence all over the county and those distilleries paid cost for grain, converting the same in spirits. Coopers made barrels and the spirits were transported in these barrels to far distant points. Some went as far as where Omaha now stands and there bartered to traders and Indians – one to three drinks for a buffalo hide. These hides were brought back to local tanneries and tanned with the curly hair in and sold as lap robes for ten dollars each.

All and sundry sold grain to the distilleries. Odd as it may seem, some six distilleries operated in certain districts before any church organization was founded. Some distillery operators became mediators of church organizations. The business was by necessity accepted by all as legitimate and proper.

Water power saw and grist mills came in early and much building was done in the second, third and fourth decades. Lumber was another bulky commodity and except for local consumption, few made money from lumber then except those who could float as in rafts down the Genesee to Rochester.

During the first quarter of the last century, (*meaning the 1800's*) population and grain production rapidly increased. Distilleries no longer could take all the grain. Great droves of cattle and some sheep came in from the east, consuming some of the grain, money became scarce, land prices and interest rates, especially thru the manipulation of the Holland Land Company, increased and hard times existed around 1817, 20 and 23. Many settlers left for land further west, others returned to New England and then came a great change—the construction of the Erie Canal and its completion, 1822-26. Settlers were given work with or without teams during its construction; lands were left for women and children to work the best they could until the canal was opened for navigation. Transportation was at last available to the east and west; necessities and luxuries poured in as grain, hides, lumber and wood products were sent out.

Wood products factories, various manufacturing and tanneries rapidly developed, many products were hauled to York Landing on the Genesee River and thence to the Erie Canal. Tanneries paid cash for hemlock bark for tanning. Millions of feet of hemlock lumber was peeled of bark and the logs left to decay. Many men were

employed as bark peelers. Some sections deferred farming to sell bark. So much bark came into Attica from Bennington that the bark got the name of "Bennington Wheat".

This period of prosperity continued with few exceptions or interruptions to the Civil War. Flax for local manufacture of linen was extensively raised. Sheep were kept by nearly every farmer for meat and the wool which was spun in nearly every household. Carding mills were established and there was much spinning. Some wool was shipped but not in quantity until the third quarter of the 19th century.

Railroads started operating in the county in 1843, 52, 69, 70, and 80 and eventually supplanted the use of the Erie and Genesee Valley Canals as the later had supplanted the use of boats on the Genesee River plying to Saint Helens. Customary small shops and mills previously scattered where water power was available, concentrated in villages. Clearing of forests dried up streams, and steam engines became popular by 1852. Warsaw became the center of the lumber trade. Maple sugar and syrup from this and the southern tier of counties found a central market at Warsaw. Large flouring mills developed at Lamont (East Pike), Pike, Attica, Warsaw, and Perry.

The Civil War marked the end of that period of prosperity. Money again became scarce, farming became more general, trade was by barter and hard times existed for a number of years. Farm fences were by this time sufficiently constructed to allow larger cattle herds and more sheep. About the only method of obtaining quick money was by the sale of homemade butter, delivered in Buffalo or Rochester. Some could be sold to buyers at Attica.

Then during the late 1860's, another and the greatest period of prosperity was ushered in by the starting of **commercial cheese factories by George Hoy of Johnsonburg** who, after years of experimenting, established at Johnsonburg the first commercial cheese factory west of Rome, NY. Others started up in rapid succession, dotting the whole county, each factory taking the milk from about 800 milk cows. Dairies increased and by 1890 five brokerage concerns were required to handle the great quantity of Cheddar cheese shipped to England for cash. As milk had to be hauled daily to these factories by individual farmers, a great demand was made for better roads, serviceable the year around, and the hitherto plowed turnpikes became graded roads all over the county.

Apple orchards had grown to produce a large quantity of apples—many were packed in barrels. Apple dryers came into existence all over the county. Fresh barreled apples and dried apples in boxes were mostly shipped abroad. Then came the cold storage plants and apple drying declined. So did the apple business but continued somewhat until the severe winter of 1933-1934, when most of the orchards froze out.

About 1895 cheese making started to decline, due to "creameries" and or "butter making plants", starting up in villages and paying a little better price for fluid milk or cream. Railroads ran "milk trains" to haul milk to the cities. Improved farm machinery came on the market, sulky plows, mowers, planters, self-binding reapers and hay harvesting machinery. Much building was done. Whey, the by-product from the cheese factories was used as hog feed and great numbers of hogs were raised and many sold to local butchers.

Hay, beans, wheat, rye, barley, oats and buckwheat, coupled with milk, hogs, beef and wool made this the heyday of farmers of the

County, the basis for the period of self-sufficiency, general contentment and desire for prominence of individual position for a livelihood, extending thru the "gay nineties," the coming of electricity, the automobile up to the outbreak of the First World War.

Cheese making along with hog raising practically passed out of the picture about 1900. Two money stringencies, caused by frenzied finance, marked the latter part of this period, one during 1893, and the other during 1907, both of short duration.

During this time, starting June 19, 1878, salt was discovered on the Charles Mathews farm near Wyoming resulting in some 14 salt blocks with their accompanying cooper shops, spreading up the Wyoming Valley into Rock Glen, Silver Springs, Castile and Perry. Many people were employed. This added greatly to the general prosperity until the latter end of the last century when consolidated interests finally absorbed all the salt works and razed the buildings, excepting the one on the Mathews farm, part of which yet remains, over the original well and block at Silver Springs which has grown to be the largest producer of table salt in the world.

Manufacturing plants of large size, other than flouring mills followed the closing of the salt blocks and the end of the cheese making days. Foundries, pumps, sap evaporators, agricultural machinery, cutlery, elevators, stokers, buttons, lanterns, machine tools and others began being manufactured. Knitting mills and canneries became major plants and nurseries increased.

Concrete and macadam roads wove their network over the county, dairies increased and farming became less general—then—the first World War. Prices jumped, land values became greatly inflated, farm help became scarce, high wages in the manufacturing cities were available. Land and machinery prices for young men desiring to start farming were prohibitive. Young men, some girls, and many elders left farms and villages for the cities, population declined. Then came the aftermath of the war and by 1920 many farms were abandoned and land prices declined but by 1922 factories again began mass production, following an enormous increase in automotive and supplying industries.

Tractors became popular, local creameries went out of existence as large milk plants began buying milk. No longer did individual

farmers haul their milk. Instead it started being picked up by truck, some by refrigerator trucks and either transported to the milk products plants or to the cities. Factory production became specialized. Trades and professions split up into various specializations. Dairying and poultry raising became specialized and the age of specialists had been ushered in.

Beef breeds of cattle came in, hogs and sheep had practically disappeared and the main rural occupation became dairying with potato raising in some sections developed to a high degree. Livestock had been shipped to the packers before the First World War, and continued until local buying of livestock for slaughter ceased. There is hardly a building that could be called a slaughter house left in the county. Excepting some veal and chickens, all meat is shipped in.

Since the market crash of 1929, the people of the county have had their share of the long depression existing to the present. Now 28 percent of the population live in villages, 40 percent is farmers and 32 percent non-farmers, occupying country or farm homes.

Hard times have existed for short periods, generally with the exception of that time immediately after the Civil War and during the depression of the 1930's. Other years have been 1817, 1820, 1847, 1863, 1873, 1893, 1907, 1913, 1920, and the depression starting in 1931. The severest suffering was during 1817 and the least during 1907, 1913 and 1920. The severest losses by winter cold were during the winters of 1888-89 and 1933-34. Droughts, fires, floods and winds have at times wrought havoc in different parts of the county but not the county as a whole. The altitude varying from less than 1,000 to 2,000 feet has resulted in varied production.

A great factor in the development of the county has been the early and continued progress of education in schools and institutions of higher learning. This and the press of the county as well, have since the very beginning far outdistanced the onward march of industrial progress. Thus, **138 years of development and progress of the county** unfolds, passing thru four great wars, lean years and years of plenty but always moving forward. Now, we see another great World War in progress and the answer of further development is held by the future.

(So this segment of our newsletter sums up the first 138 years in Wyoming County, of which The Town of Sheldon is a part of. 71 years have passed since Mr. Benham wrote this; there could be a book written on the changes since this time. We sincerely hope you enjoyed taking a trip back in time. As for the "Sheldon Democrat," in our next issue we will present some history on this publication which originated in Sheldon. If you have any issues we could copy and return, please let us know. They hold a wealth of information, the past is slipping away, and we need to preserve the rich history of The Township of Sheldon.)

Feb 16, 1947 Wy. Co. Times

Barber and Torge have sold their hardware and business to Frank Lenz of Kenmore. Mr.

July 8, 1948 W. N. Yorker - Strykersville News

Leon G. Herrmann has completed a special course in television installation and service directed by the engineering department of Philco Corp.

Our firemen have so far succeeded in building a huge scrap pile and collecting a very large pile of papers. They are an ambitious lot. If they cannot make money one way, they will another.

The parish picnic of St. Mary's Church proved a huge success due to excellent weather and a large attendance, coupled with the generous support of all, Robert Barvian won the \$50 on the ticket holding the lucky number.

Mr. and Mrs. Donald Ash returned on Monday from their honeymoon in Cleveland, Ohio.

Potatoes sold for 10 lb. bag 55 cents

Unidentified picture "Can you tell us where this Hotel was?"



J.W. Metz "Evergreen Hotel"

The Immigrant Trunk *Whitewashed crude box has a story to tell*

"It was just an old wooden box"; at first glance one would think it was just an old worthless piece of timber nailed together. It would be absolutely unusable except perhaps to fuel a good bonfire on a cool summer's eve. But wait, if it could have talked it probably would have said:

"Please rescue me, I have a story to tell; I am much too valuable to go up in smoke. You see, I've been around and was very important in the early to mid-1800's to a family from Belgium. Their surname was George and they came across the ocean on the ship named "The Oglethorpe" leaving from the Port of LeHavre, arriving in the Port of New York on July 24, 1835. Selected precious belongings were packed ever so carefully inside, and although I was bounced around and was heavy and bulky to move, I felt each and every wave as they bashed our ship. I was carefully built for the journey to America, a box about 45 inches long, 21 inches wide and 16 inches deep. I am the oak box that seemed so useless up until a few years ago when descendants identified me as the immigrant trunk of Hubert George, his wife Elizabeth, and his family. I strongly feel I contributed to their happiness with the possessions I held as they left on their journey to America, not knowing exactly what was in store for them. As the ship left for the open sea, the family looked in vain at the fatherland for the last time. They were leaving their home most likely never to set foot on the soil again, and many friends and loved ones were left behind. Second thoughts came in their minds, especially as the sea sickness overcame many of the family members. The waves were like tall mountains around the ship, and sometimes trunks like me had to be securely fastened down and often were soaked by the water that poured through the hatches in rough weather. There was really very little for children – or anyone – to do on the boat. When Hubert and Elizabeth's children were not sick they helped their mother tend the younger children. A lot of time was spent on the deck except on rainy days. Although it was summer, they wore heavy clothing thinking if it kept the cold out in the winter, it would keep the heat out in the summer. There was a lot of family praying and silent pleads to God for mercy. Days dragged on into weeks, often times wondering if they would ever see America. When arriving in New York, they were appalled by the strangeness of the area, the size was enormous and there was so much activity. They watched over the pieces of luggage until they decided which way to go to meet with relatives in the Sheldon, NY area. Here they were promised rich farm land. After the family was settled, I was moved to the Nicholas George 3rd's farm and there I had been used for decades, for many years to store grain in, but as of the last several years I was tucked away in an old chicken house, full of all the debris that goes with that kind of environment. I am very grateful that Hubert's offspring had listened to family legend and insisted that there had to be a trunk stored somewhere on the old homestead. Family lore had it that when you opened it up, the inside of the lid was smooth to the touch. Although it was hard at first to tell, sure enough after all the fragments were scraped away; I was still as smooth as glass. With fortitude from a Gr. Grandchild of Nicholas 3rd, I'm almost in as good a shape as I was for the trip to America. The George's were good people, if you only knew the faith and love they bought with them. Their story is probably quite similar to most of the immigrant settlers in Sheldon and in the area."

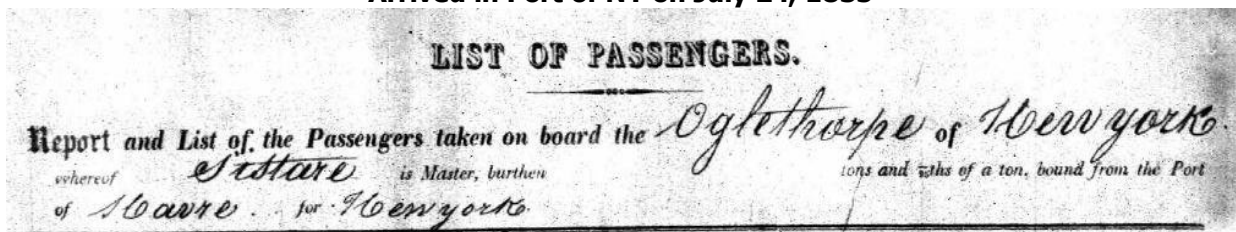
But of course a trunk can't talk; still this crude wooden box is a symbol of a legend to reflect on. It was 177 years ago that the Hubert George family decided they must, or chose to leave their country in Belgium and fled to America. Hubert was the third son of Innocens and Mary (Alarding) George. Innocens was b. 1748 In Viville, Luxembourg, Belgium and Mary Allarding, his wife. They were married July 11, 1774 in Fouches, Luxembourg, Belgium. Hubert, his wife Elizabeth, and their children settled in The Town of Sheldon and shared their knowledge of farming with other new settlers at a time when the first settlers from the East were moving westward. They helped form St. Cecilia's Parish, and Nicholas George was one of the first Trustees of the Church.

The ship list stated they brought with them several parcels and although one cannot be sure what was inside this abandoned trunk for the long journey, they most likely packed a Bible, Crucifix, prayer book, Baptismal Certificate, rosary, bottle of holy water, soap, drinking cup, salve, cream, a hand towel, muslin, cloths, a feather tick, an apron, stockings, knife, spoons, forks, hatpin, ball of thread, towels, aprons, needles, yarn, plate, thread, purse, thimble, buttons, cotton thread, shoes and blankets amongst other treasures. Grain seeds, fruit seeds for orchards, flower seeds as peonies and morning glories, garden seeds such as turnip were probably included. Food items such as sugar, flour, goats, salt, chocolate wafers, potatoes, a coat, bacon meat, bread, dried apples, cracklings, lard, rice, beans, sauerkraut, & honey perhaps were packed as food. They made a list of everything they would like to take and then began to eliminate those things which were not important. This process was a form of survival for the immigrants. They were determined to get to the new country where life would be better.

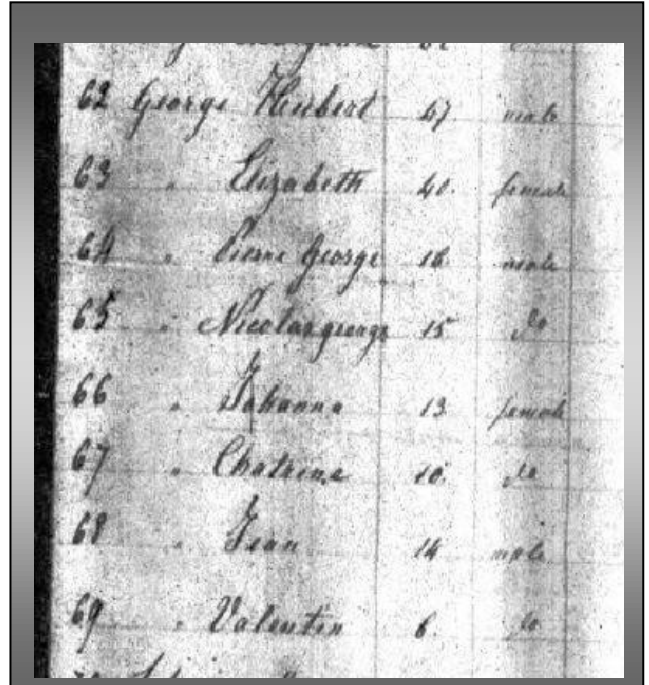
They were not the only family of George's to immigrate to Sheldon, NY. Hubert's older brother, Peter, md. to Anna Kettle, was the first George ancestor to set foot on America's shores. They came with nine children in 1834. Family lore has it that they walked 250 miles to reach the port of Le Havre, France and came on a wooden, square-rigged freighter named "Constellation." It took them six weeks crossing the Atlantic. Peter purchased 160 acres of land at Hoard's Corner's, paying \$14 an acre.

Groups wanted very much to stay together because they were not just neighbors but also good friends and in many cases relatives. Having the same people live next door to them in America would make their new home seem less unusual and they would not feel so alone. Choosing that land for a group of individuals would be very difficult. But in this case the difficulty was tempered by a common interest in good farm land, the desire to live just as they had in Belgium, but relieved from religious and political persecution. Through the centuries our Belgian ancestors have brought many skills to America, which have been used in pottery, goldsmith arts, tapestry weaving, glass, rug and leather making, house furnishings, wood and stone carving, diamond cutting, cutlery, textile industry and metallurgy.

Arrived in Port of NY on July 24, 1835



Immigrant Trunk of Hubert George family



According to the Peabody Museum in Salem Massachusetts, the *Oglethorpe* was a 361 ton vessel 107 x 27.6 x 13.7 built in Boston by Samuel Hart. She had two decks, three masts and a figurehead. Her owners were listed as Charles Jayne of New York, Oliver Sturgis and Benjamin Burroughs of Savannah.

A display of the immigrant trunk is in the "Township of Sheldon School house museum."

Compiled by Mary Ann Metzger

A special thanks to Helen Dunn of Honeoye Falls, NY for her work in transcribing for this newsletter and other typing for the society. However big or small your contribution, it is greatly appreciated. It takes a lot of hands to keep the society productive in order to preserve the past, your history.

George Family Continues Close Kinship throughout Years

Clipping from Aug. 23, 1939 Sheldon Democrat

George Reunion

For the 15th consecutive year the descendants of Amandus, Peter and Hubert George, sons of Innocent George and Mary Alarding of Herzig, Belgium met. This reunion was held at Frinks' Corners, North Java on August 20, 1939.

Several families unpacked baskets at noon and enjoyed a picnic lunch and throughout the afternoon; approximately 200 relatives gathered on the green. A splashing shower interrupted the merry making for a brief period, but before refreshments being served.

Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Schallert were host and hostess at a delightful buffet supper served in their home to members of the committee.

Late in the evening the meeting broke up with high hopes for another grand reunion, same time, same place, next year.

The Sheldon Historical Society has added a new George reunion picture to their collection. We now have four; for you George descendants, come and find your relatives.

From F.W.Kehl's book written 1946:

In Sheldon there are three distinct George families that are no more related to each other than they are related to the Lloyd George family of England. They are native from three different sovereignties of Europe, France, Belgium and Germany, and their relation has nothing in common, excepting the name.

What is a real George in one family is not of the same species in the others. As far as the few rest of us are concerned, we are satisfied to let them thrash it out among themselves.



3859 Strykersville Rd.

PO Box 122,
Strykersville, NY 14145

*History is a relentless master. It has no present, only the past rushing into the future.
To try to hold fast is to be swept aside.
John F. Kennedy*

The Historical Society welcomes new members! If you find local History interesting, we hope that you make a membership contribution and join us. It is open to anyone with an interest in the history of Sheldon, or a desire to volunteer services without restriction to age or place of residence. We maintain a School House Museum that is state chartered. There is always work to do to maintain this structure and to continue our research of data and archives and preserve treasured artifacts.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

DATE: _____

Make check payable to The Town of Sheldon Historical Society.

Mail To:

Donna Kirsch, financial secretary.

4458 Richardson Rd.,
Arcade, NY 14009



*A nostalgic tabloid; you
won't want to miss it.*

Attention:

The date on the address label signifies the due date of your membership. Don't let your subscription lapse. Dues are \$5.00 a year and \$50.00 per person for lifetime membership. This helps us continue Historical research of the Town of Sheldon.

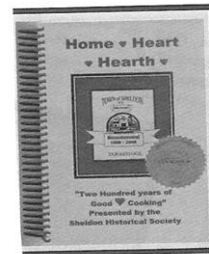
Highlights inside this issue include:

Early Days in Wyoming Co.

"The Immigrant Trunk"

Next Meeting **Aug. 16, 2012 @ 7:00** at the School House Museum; also mark your calendar for meetings on **Sept. 20 and Oct. 18**, we really want you to attend.

Queries are welcome. We are here to help you with your genealogy or facts of past history in Sheldon.
Email us at Sheldonhistoricalsociety@hotmail.com



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members of your
family, they are very
nostalgic.*

The contribution of your time, sharing your artifacts and archival material along with monetary donations are deeply appreciated.

