

# NNHS NEWS LETTER

Northville Northampton Historical Society

Issue 79  
March 2017  
Editor  
Gail M Cramer



## THE SPILLWAY (aka Hunter Creek Dam or Hog Back)

The Spillway, or Hunter Creek Dam, was built when the Conklinville Dam was built. The chief engineer, Edward Sargent was responsible for having the spillway built. He knew that the Hunter Creek, flowing on the east side of the village of Northville would become a breeding ground for mosquitoes and other bugs and cause a stagnant swamp. His thought was with the spillway being built, a nice little lake would be formed. Today we enjoy "The Little Lake" or some call it the Northville Lake, for swimming, fishing, kayaking, and of course it's beauty.



Tuesday March 29, 1932, two years after it was built, it was noticed that where the spillway discharges into the Sacandaga reservoir, a settlement of the concrete pavement had dropped. Then began an undercutting of the earth that supported the pavement and slabs of cement in the spillway. The Superintendent of HRRB in Northville, not being an engineer, did not realize how serious the situation was. Ed Sargent, Engineer in the Sacandaga Reservoir project and Harry Fleig, resident engineer for HRRB arrived at the scene April 2. Until then, they had not been informed of the situation. Much was done to prevent further leaking and caving of the cement slab.. To relieve pressure on the dam, a 20 feet wide and 30 feet deep trench was blasted out of the south end of the dam. They built a temporary emergency wooden spillway. Unfortunately quicksand soon washed out beneath it and a huge washout 160 feet wide and 45 ft deep, took out nearly an acre of land belonging to H. Lawton. The pressure from opening the dam emptied the Little Lake in one hour.



A  
PEOPLE  
WITHOUT  
THE KNOWLEDGE  
OF THEIR  
PAST HISTORY  
ORIGIN  
AND CULTURE  
IS LIKE A TREE  
WITHOUT ROOTS

Marcus Garvey

1932  
350 BATTLING  
TO REPAIR DAM  
AT NORTHVILLE  
Day and Night Shifts Are  
Thrown Into Fight to Save  
Hunter Creek Dam

LARGE SECTION  
OF NORTHVILLE  
DAM GOES OUT  
Nearly Acre of Land Washed  
Away by Water Pouring  
Through Trench

## Spillway Tragedy Continued

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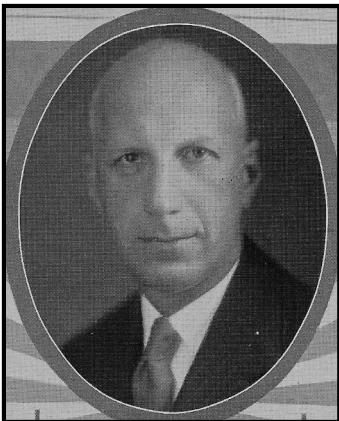
After the first leak was discovered, during the night, the pressure from the little lake caused a larger fissure. An attempt to clog the leaks with cement failed as did stone and dirt that a fleet of heavy trucks dumped into the hole. They worked day and night by floodlights.

In an effort to learn how deeply the cave had cut back under the spillway, several men went into the cave under the spillway. The floor of the spillway collapsed. Fred Snyder, of Dodgeville, a contractor who built the dam, Robert Mahar, of Northville and William La Haines, foreman, narrowly escaped death. The three men were standing on the floor of the spillway as it collapsed and were carried down with the concrete. Harry Fleig was not as fortunate, as the concrete collapsed on top of him.

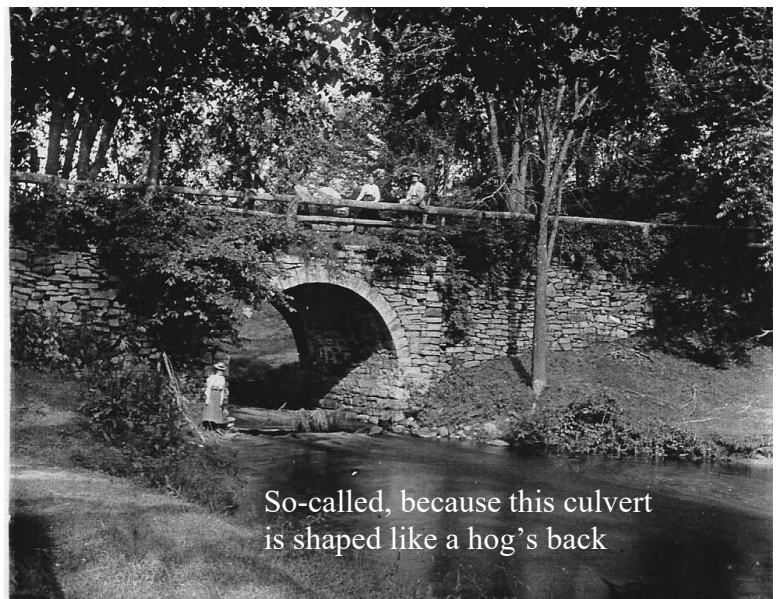
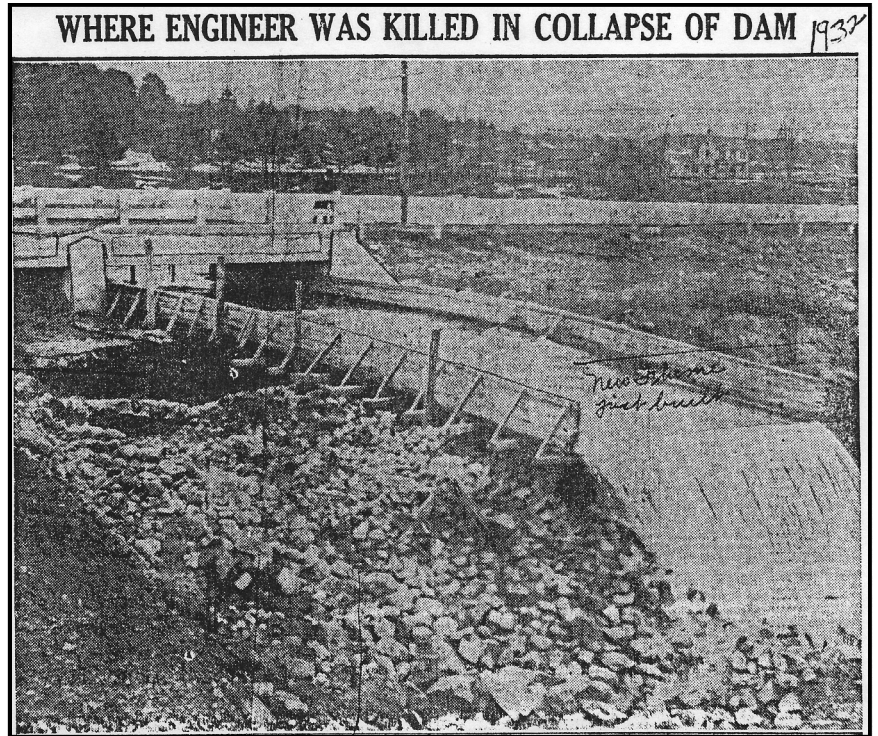
### HARRY FLEIG CRUSHED TO DEATH WHEN PART OF DAM AT NORTHVILLE, COLLAPSES

Engineer Caught Under 200 Tons of Concrete While Making Survey of Cave Washed Out And Which Threatened Entire Dam; Fred Snyder, Robert Mahar and William La Haine Narrowly Escape Death

The Northville fire department under the direction on Chief Pete Welch was pressed into service to help out in any-way needed.



Edward Sargent



So-called, because this culvert is shaped like a hog's back

Have you ever heard or wondered why the local folks call the road/dam by the spillway (South Main Street), HOGBACK? This is a picture of the first bridge from South Main Street over to what is now Skiff Road. The date of this bridge is unknown, but was probably built when the street was laid out in 1797. In 1859 the bridge collapsed. The road/bridge didn't curve as it does today, it was a straight road over to what is now Skiff Road.. Skiff Road was the road to Fish House at that time. The bridge was replaced by another stone bridge with a concrete floor at a cost of \$250. This bridge lasted until the reservoir was formed in 1930.



## WIFI IN 1915?

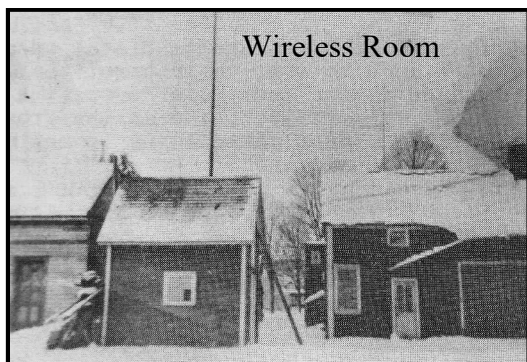
I don't think so, but there was WIRELESS

In 1915, Herbert Corey and Walter B Russell decided to become telegraphers, later joined by Ray Moore. A line was strung between the three boy's houses.

In need of an antenna, they paid Hugh Willard \$7.00 to haul two 55 foot poles from Maple Grove. Since Russell was working as night operator for the telephone company, the line crew set the poles and installed the antenna for them. It consisted of two wires on ten foot bamboo spreaders.

The second floor of an outbuilding behind the John Cole house became the Wireless Room. (S Main St. between Eslers' Garage and Terry Warner's house) The boys continued to acquire equipment until one day they received their first signal from the Navy station in Annapolis Maryland.

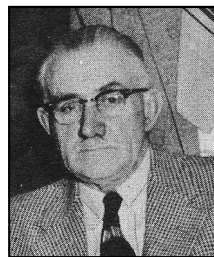
With the help of Olaf Johnson, they then built a sending unit. It was closed down in 1917 and 1919. Walter had returned from the Navy as a Radioman First Class in 1919. That year they copied the World Series as it was being relayed to ships at sea. A messenger on a bicycle, relayed the progress of the game from the wireless to Kested's Drug Store.



Wireless Room



Russell



Corey

## FOLLOW UP FROM FEBRUARY ISSUE



Howard Lindsey did the deliveries in this panel truck.

Mary Ann "Cookie" Langr Blanchett wrote: "We Langr kids used to ride to camp in the back of this truck over washboard dirt roads. Dad would turn off the key and make it back-fire. We thought that was great fun."

## 90 Fireman Battle Northville Blaze Six Hours. Four Are Left Homeless

This fire took place in 1982 according to a Gloversville newspaper article. Cindy's Beanery, several apartments and the

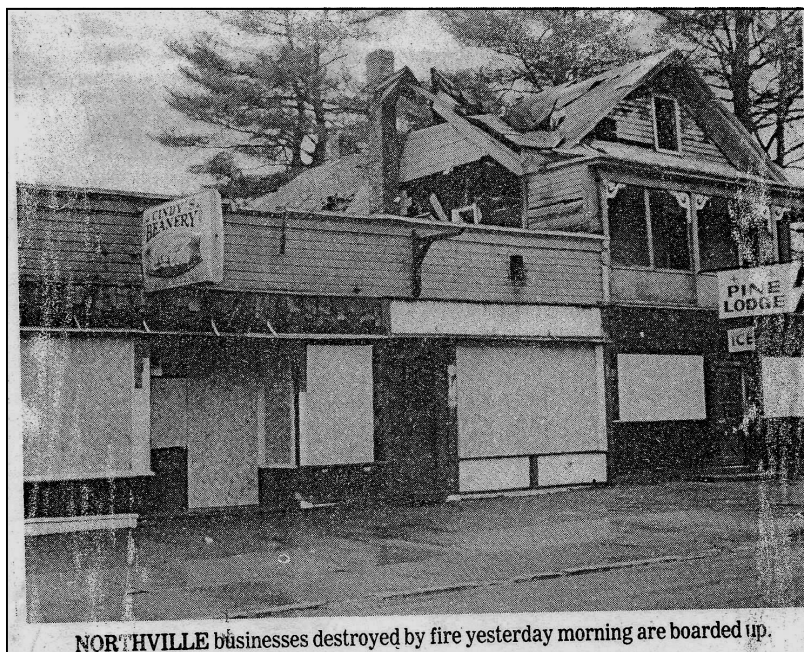


Pine Lodge were all severely burned.

The buildings were eventually torn down. Over the years many different business occupied these buildings.

Jim Izzo wrote: "The old Pine Lodge was operated as a soda shop in the mid 40's by my parents, Jim and Emily Izzo and later by my great aunt Mary Izzo." Other owners connected to the Pine Lodge are: Harold and Diane

Van Amburg, Gerald "Cupe" VanNostrand, and Ellingwoods.



My email server dropped over half of my email addresses. I have tried to recover them. If you know of anyone that says they didn't get a March newsletter have them email me and I'll put them back on the list. Thank you



MAIN STREET IN NORTHVILLE 1920

Things were sure different in 1920 when this picture was taken. They must have moved some of the snow to have such high snow banks. The road sure doesn't look like it had been plowed. Too bad they didn't have snowmobiles back then. The street would have been tough going for the cars, but a horse and sleigh would have moved right along. Remember when the streets were never bare until Spring? Can you just imagine today's huge log trucks driving on this street?

## Ladies. Tailoring.

We are introducing (as a side line to our Millinery) a Ladies' Tailoring Department. Have just received over two hundred and fifty samples of Fall and Winter Goods, with designs in Suits, Dress and Walking Skirts, Jackets, Rain Coats, and the new Louis XIV coat and Corset Coats, exclusively to measure.

Also five hundred samples Fall and Winter Goods for Gent's Clothing, Suits, Overcoats, Rain Coats, Trousers, etc., made to order.

Call and see samples and get prices. Satisfaction and fit guaranteed.

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**THE NORTHVILLE CASH STORE**  
Northville, N. Y.

This store was located on one side of the building that houses our hardware store today. Locals could do most of their shopping right here in Northville. We wouldn't have had to drive all the way to Gloversville or to a Mall to do our shopping