

NNHS NEWS LETTER

Northville Northampton Historical Society

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Editor
Gail M Cramer



Memorial Day

Northville has always celebrated Memorial Day with respect for our Veterans with a parade and ceremony. I remember as a child being very excited to march in the parade. Each child was given a flag to carry. We assembled at the old south main street school house (now municipal building location) and marched up Prospect Hill to the cemetery. It was fun but also a solemn occasion. We were taught not to walk on the graves, be respectful, no running around. The high school band marched and also played at the cemetery. Local dignitaries and a local pastor sat on the podium. The Gettysburg address was delivered by a student that he/she had learned by heart.

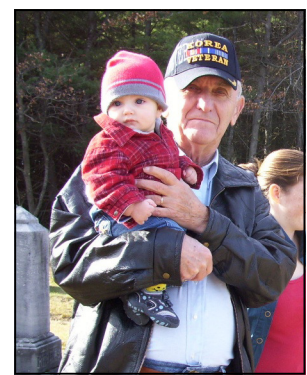


Museum

It's almost time to open up the museum. Gloria Fulmer and Linda Thompson have been cleaning and putting the displays back in order after being stored away for the winter.

We will be opening up the first Saturday of July through the end of August. Wednesdays and Saturdays from 10 to 2.

Memorial Day 2010 at the Prospect Hill Cemetery



Murder at Johnnycake Hollow

The Northville White Cap Incident

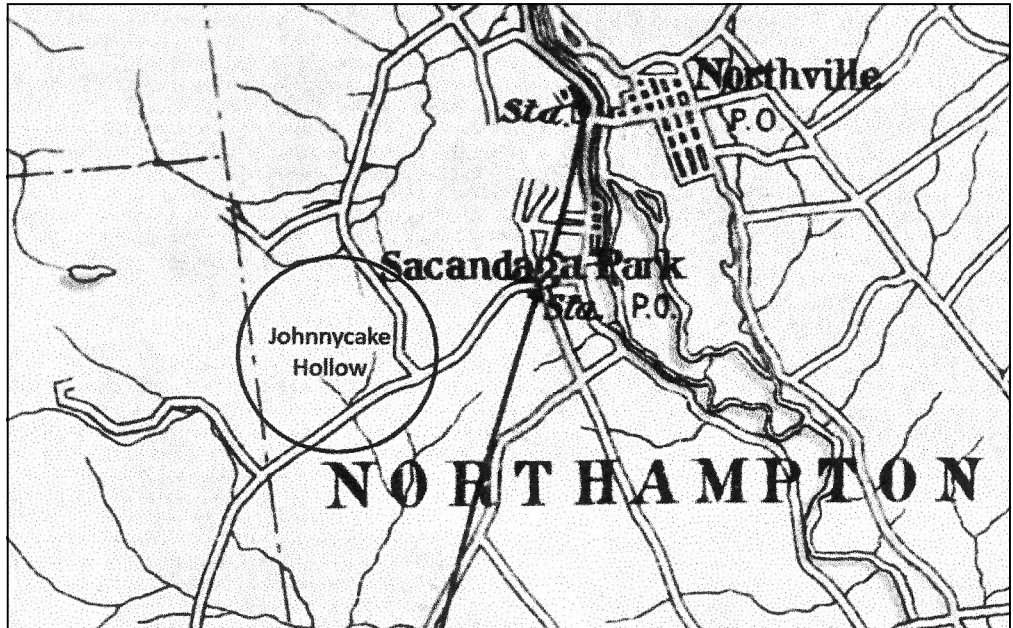
by Dave Waite

It's strange how a seemingly innocent event can set into motion something that grows to engulf a whole town and change forever the lives of untold numbers of people. In this case, the event was a man, who in hopes of bettering himself brought his family to live in the hamlet of Johnnycake Hollow in rural Fulton County. (AKA *Gifford's Valley*) It was early in 1889 that thirty-six-year old Samuel Carrington, his wife, thirty-three year-old Katie, and their three children moved from Baldwinsville, a rural community outside of Syracuse New York, into a house across the Sacandaga River from the village of Northville. After settling into their new home, Samuel found work building a carriage road in the nearby summer resort of Sacandaga Park.

Katie Carrington, who was described as "very good-looking" soon caught the eye of several men in the neighborhood. It was not long before she had taken up with neighbor John Barclay. As the two did little to hide their relationship, either from her husband or anyone else in the neighborhood, the gossip and public outrage that followed soon made it common knowledge. Within a short time, Katie tired of Barclay and setting him aside, took up with John's younger brother Oscar.

If you were looking for an example of the old adage about an apple doesn't fall from the tree, the Barclay clan from Johnnycake Hollow would be an ideal candidate. Henry Barclay, the father of John and Oscar, was born in 1834, the son of Irish parents and a laborer who had likely been drawn to the area seeking the opportunity for work and a home for his family. At the start of the Civil War, he left his wife Paulina to care for their two young sons and enlisted in the Army. He was mustered in at Northville in January of 1862, but by May of that year had deserted with him and his family disappearing from the public record for the next 18 years.

When they surfaced again in 1880, the family is back living in Johnnycake Hollow, their oldest son John still living at home, along with his siblings, thirteen-year-old Reuben, eight-year-old Freddy, and their youngest, daughter named Minnie.



Three years later Henry and Paulina Barclay were divorced, with Henry soon remarrying and then staying with his new wife in Johnnycake Hollow. When the relationship of Henry and his new wife soured, he went back to Paulina. Henry's son Oscar then stepped in to take up the role of "husband" to the wife his father had left. Oscar and his stepmother soon moved in with Samuel Carrigan and his wife Katie and their children. Oscar's actions so incensed his family that they brought a lawsuit against the Carrigan's accusing them of

A "disorderly house", a charge they were never able to prove in court. By this time, the local community was so incensed by the tangled relationships among these couples, that some of them decided that the time had come to take matters into their own hands.

Throughout the last week of October in 1889 talk had been circulating in Northville that Oscar Barclay, Samuel Carrigan, and the women who were with them should be treated to a lesson with tar and feathers. At the center of it all was the Barclay clan, making plans and gathering

what would be needed, down to even having the women of their household fashion the hoods that would identify the men as being vigilantes in those days known as White Caps. Those who did the sewing were not satisfied with a simple sack with eyeholes, a descriptions later revealed that the hoods were adorned with black piping on the edges and a red tassel on top.

Tradition tells us that the term White Cap originated in County Kerry Ireland, where a family by the name of Whitecap would visit neighbors that they deemed to be immoral and punish them with a cat-o-nine tails. In America, White Caps had been active since the 1830s and was generally directed toward maintaining community values, though the term was also used to identify race-related activities in the post-Civil War South.

On Saturday, October 26, 1899, the talk became reality when twelve men gathered to take on the task, likely given courage by the bottle of whiskey that freely passed between them. Soon after dusk had settled over the community these vigilantes turned their clothes inside out to conceal their identity, donned their hoods, and started on their way to Johnnycake Hollow.

Their first stop was the house shared by the intended victims, where both Samuel and Katie were seized, stripped, and coated with tar and feathers. In the attack, Katie fainted and was left, with Samuel being placed on a pole and carried away. After "riding the rail" for half-mile, Samuel was whipped until he revealed the whereabouts of Oscar Barclay.

It was while the gang sought out their next victim that the only firsthand witness came forward to describe the events that took place that night.

William H. Cole, a grocer from Gloversville had come into the area that day to attend a Salvation Army meeting in Northville. He first encountered the men in disguise heading out of the village as he headed to attend the meeting. When the meeting broke around 10:30, Cole and his friends he was with, en-

countered the gang, by now having dealt with Carrington and seeking Oscar Barclay. Despite hearing that the vigilantes were armed with what he described as "rifles and revolvers," he and his friends followed at the rear of the gang. When he asked what the long pole they were caring was for, one of the men said that they were "going to get rid of some of their bad neighbors."

The White Caps soon stood outside of the home of Sidney Sweet, Oscar's place of concealment that had been beaten out of Samuel Carrigan earlier in the evening. Threatening to break in the door, Sweet allowed the gang inside after sending Oscar up to the attic. Finding the downstairs empty, Fred Barclay headed for the stairs to check the upper rooms. The details of what happened next are unclear, with some saying that Oscar called down a warning to the men that he would shoot anyone who approached, and others that he simply shot at the first in line. No matter the details, seconds later Oscar Barclay's brother Fred lay dead at the bottom of the stairs having received a load of buckshot in the head.

After the initial shock and confusion passed, some called for Oscar to be lynched for the killing, but after realizing the reality of the situation the gang withdrew. Fred's lifeless body was left at the bottom of the stairs, no one willing to even cover his remains. After the incident, Oscar escaped through an upper window and hid in a nearby house. It was there that Deputy Sheriff Charles Bacon found him the next day and took him into custody to keep him from further harm by local citizens. Despite the community's desire to be rid of him, Oscar Barclay was seen as the victim, and the killing of his brother was seen as an act of self-defense.

Two days after the shooting a coroner's inquest was held to determine what charges should be brought against Barclay. The hearing lasted nearly 12 hours and involved twenty witnesses who testified about the incident. The conclusion rendered by the jury was that Oscar Barclay had acted in self-defense in the shooting of his brother. The jury also censured all the White Caps who had participated in the attack.

The gang of White Caps had been identified soon after the shooting, with those who could be found were arrested, and brought before the local Justice of the Peace, John McKnight. The men who stood before the Justice were: Henry Barclay, and his sons, John and Reuben, Frank S. Eddy, and George Reed. Three of the men involved in the incident were missing. Cooley Dane and Leroy Anibal had fled and were still at large, while the third, Tom Eddy, was confined to his home after suffering a nervous breakdown from witnessing the shooting.

It was decided that the case would go before the grand jury, and three of the five men who had come before the Justice were released on two hundred dollars bail each. John and Reuben Barclay, who had difficulty immediately raising funds for their bail were held in two small rooms at the back of the Northville police station house. When

KILLED HIS BROTHER!
A Horrible End to a
White Cap Raid.
Tar, Feathers and a
Shot Gun.
NORTHVILLE EXCITED!
Seven Men Under Arrest at
Northville.
The Story of an Eye
Witness.

visited by a reporter from the Gloversville Daily Leader, he found them seated on the barrels and reading a Bible and prohibitionist newspaper. Of the two, John was the most talkative, telling first of his difficulties with Katie Carrigan, then adding that he had been kindly treated by the police officers and that in the future he would be "leading a different life." After interviewing these two at the jail, the reporter turned to Oscar Barclay, who was still being held at the jail as protection from retaliation. Oscar was willing to talk, giving this statement to the reporter. "I have not been on good terms with my father since last winter and have not been on speaking terms with my brothers for some time. I did not take any aim when I fired. I am sorry that I killed Fred, but I was so excited that I might have shot my father if I had seen him coming with a gun pointed at me".

A month after the death of Fred Barclay, Katie Carrigan attempted suicide by ingesting a lethal dose of Morphine. Her ten-year-old son alerted neighbors who worked to keep her alive until a doctor arrived. Before the drug had taken effect Katie confessed that "I would rather go to ___ than stay here and face the talk about me."

The Carrigan's and Oscar Barclay stayed in the area until just before the trial was to begin in February of 1890. As he was needed as a witness for the prosecution in the upcoming trial, an effort was made to locate and return Samuel Carrigan. He was located at his old home in Baldwinsville and brought back to Fulton County where he was placed in jail until he could give testimony.

What happened to Katie Carrigan and Oscar Barclay was shrouded in mystery. The two were seen in Northville boarding the train to Gloversville. There Oscar got off, leaving Katie to continue to Fonda. It was assumed that they soon got back together with the opinion of the locals that they had eloped and would never return. That was likely the case, as there is no record of either of this infamous couple after that time.

While no court record have been preserved, the Troy Daily Times of June 18, 1890, offered the summary of the trial under the heading "End of White Cap Case - Indictments Dismissed - Fines" "In Northville, Fulton County, White Cap case, the indictment against Reuben Barclay and John H. Barclay was dismissed. Coley Dane, Leroy Anibal, George Reed, Thomas Eddy, and Frank L. Eddy all pleaded guilty and were each fined \$75."

With the excitement of the White Cap trial behind them, the residents of Johnnycake Hollow settled back down into the normal rhythm of life. The head of the Barclay family, Henry Barclay died of heart disease at the age of sixty-four in early 1898. His body was found in an unoccupied house in Johnnycake Hollow, though since his death was not suspicious no effort was made to determine the reason he had been in the building, it is possible that he had returned to visit the scene of the incident that took his son's life and broke up the Barclay Clan forever.

"I want to thank Northampton Town Historian Gail Cramer for provided material from her archives for this article. Other sources include the newspaper archives at nyhistoricalnews-[press.org](http://www.nyhistoricalnews-press.org) and [fultoncounty.com](http://www.fultoncounty.com).

Illustrations:

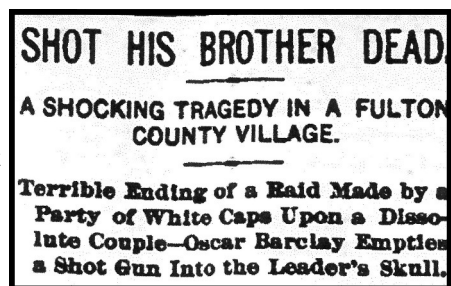
1907 Geo. Walker & Co. Automobile Map of New York Mohawk Section, from the authors collection.

Albany Argus, October 29 1889

"Shot his brother dead"

Gloversville Daily Leader, October 28, 1889 "Killed his brother"

Albany Argus, February 17 1890 "A Murder Sequel"



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