

NNHS NEWS LETTER

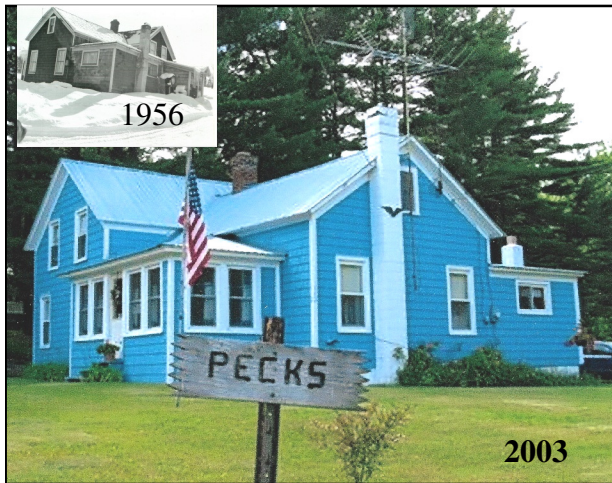
Northville Northampton Historical Society

Issue 142
July-August
2022
Editor
Gail M Cramer



Historical Houses/Homes

Northville has many old historical houses, one dating back to 1819. It's fun to ride or walk around our town and view these houses and often wonder who built them, or what families lived there, and what stories could be told from inside the walls. A house is only a "home" when someone lives in it. Ever notice an empty house has no warmth until the family belongings, furniture and of course the people are living there. Below is the story about a house/home in Gifford's Valley, written by the person that lived there, Mary Peck. I'm sure every house in our town has interesting history and stories similar to Mary's story. More stories to come in future newsletters about our historic houses. Want to write one about your house?



It was a cold, January first, 1956, when Richard and I, moved into the house at 112 Gifford Valley Road. We immediately hung a sign, "**#1 Johnny Cake Hollow.**"

In order to obtain a G. I. Loan we had to install a complete bathroom, the house had never had one. There was an outhouse behind the garage. This was a convenient amenity for many years for the neighborhood children who didn't want to stop playing and go home. We had spent the month of December renovating the kitchen with new floors and knotty pine cupboards made by our good friend, Dan Weaver, a master car-

penter. Dan told me that his mother had been born in the house in the year 1880. Her parents had moved in with the grandparents, the Giffords, for economic reasons, as they had been farming there for some time. Dan's sister Marian Edwards Eddy was born there in 1903. When we bought the house there was a full barn behind the house with stanchions for 4 cows and paraphernalia for rabbits. There were a few outbuildings in back, chicken house, dog run etc. which were removed. Unfortunately, the upper level of the barn was not in good shape so my husband removed the top layer to prevent any child from having an accident. Three days after moving in and taking showers and doing laundry, we had no water. We caused some excitement in town by having Frank Fogarty drill a well. The children on the school bus insisted that we were drilling for oil.

The water had frozen up at the source from disuse but drilling was a wise choice on our part. In later years Norm Storer did extensive interior work, adding cupboards and installing paneling in several rooms.

My husband Richard was sent to Northville by the Upstate Telephone Co to replace Claude Parker who had retired. Claude told us he had built the telephone line from Northville to Wells single handedly, setting poles and running wire alone. This is true because back then, the poles were much smaller than they were later on. We lived on First Street in the village for 5 years in an apartment. Richard had seen all the roads and areas in the countryside and thought this property location was very attractive, so when it became for sale, he convinced me to move.

Continued on next page

MUSEUM NEWS

The museum has some new additions added this summer. A 1920s wooden organ pipe from the old pipe organ that was from the local Methodist Church. Come in and visit us.

During the Woodworkers weekend over 400 visitors went through the museum.

In the 1960's I had a surprise visit from Mr. George Van Vranken. George was a brother of Clarence VanVranken who was the Northampton Highway Superintendant for years. George told me that he owned the property back in the 1920's and raised animals. He had a butcher shop in what is now the garage. He said that his wife had planted most of the perennials, roses, daffodils, lilies etc. Periodically, George would load up his horse and wagon with cuts of meat and travel to Speculator and Lake Pleasant and peddle door to door. The trip took 2 or 3 days. The heavy wooden block table and the drain in the garage floor were evidence of his trade. Also a large structure in the barnyard where he hung the animals to process them.

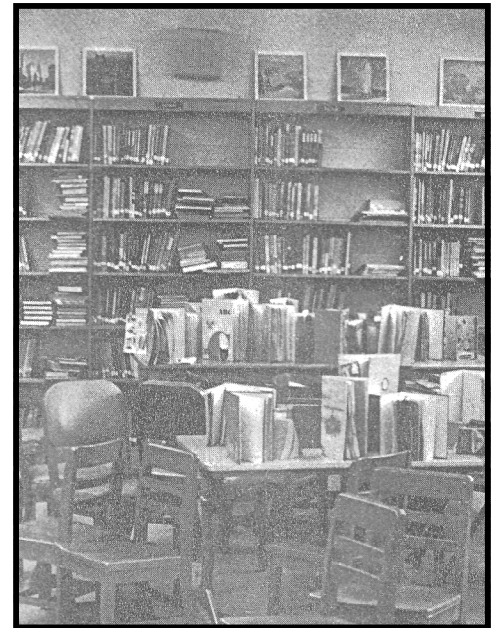
My husband moved this butcher block to the cellar of the house and used it as a worktable. Mr. VanVranken said that he traded this property for 100+ acres up in the "holler". He told me that when the reservoir was built, a house was moved from river's edge and joined to the original structure of the Gifford farm and that my living room was originally 3 rooms. What was now my kitchen used to be an outside shed and storage unit.

Jean VanVranken Bradt and Hilda, her sister, told me of visiting their Uncle George in the Valley. They lived on the High Rock road near where it came out at the Benson Road. Jean said that her mother worked at a hotel in the Park and walked to and from work. When necessary she stayed overnight and the girls were always in fear of the Gypsies who regularly traveled these roads stealing chickens and whatever else they could grab.

Floyd Arnold's name appears on the deed and search. Floyd owned the laundry down on the river and a boat livery. In 1956 when we purchased the house from Ross and Laura Williams, the corner lot held 5 small cabins which fishermen would rent from the Michaleks. There was a small store on the river. When Route 30 was diverted across the bay, the Michalek's were cut off from the water and no amount of pleading could save their business and boat livery. The cabins remained for several years and were eventually torn down.

Written by Mary (Mrs. Richard C. Peck)

Remember when the NCS Was flooded by vandals?



September 1969

The flood was discovered early Monday morning by Mrs. Evelyn Cramer when she arrived at the school to work in the cafeteria. Mr. Charles Owens was the principal of the school.

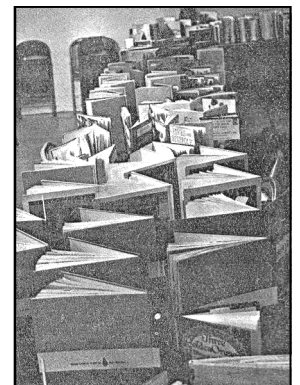
Hoses had been turned on at the second floor level. The main office was damaged as was the second floor, first floor and lower level. Water in the school was estimated as three to four inches deep.

Using shovels; custodians, teachers, Northville residents and members of the Northville Volunteer Fire Department bailed the water out of the school.

Mayfield Central School and Wells Central School loaned equipment to aid in the bailing out as did the Crown Finishing Company of Johnstown which loaned vacuum equipment. The fire department brought in fans in an effort to dry out the building.

It was estimated that there was \$150,700 worth of damage. Wall, ceilings, floors, and library books were among items destroyed by the gushing of the water.

Those responsible for the vandalism were identified and arrested.



Library books lined up drying in the cafeteria

Above information from the Gloversville Leader Herald Sept 29, 1969



WORK ON SUPER-STRUCTURE OF NEW NORTHVILLE BRIDGE IS STARTED BY CONTRACTOR

Structure Is Being Erected to Replace the Old
Northville Bridge Which Will Be Below
Water Line When Sacandaga Reservoir
Reaches Crest; Workmen Are Razing
Steam Station 1930

Workmen in the employ of the Snyder Contracting firm have started work on the super structure of the Northville bridge which it is estimated will cost about \$153,000. The bridge is being constructed by the Hudson River Regulating district to replace the old structure which will be flooded out when the waters of the reservoir reach the crest during the coming year. Work on the structure was started early last year.

Almost a year has been consumed in the structure of the cement piers which are about complete. There is still one abutment, the last one on the east side still has to be constructed before the steel super structure can be completed.

While the gates to the dam in Conklingville have been completed and the water is rising at the rate of almost a foot a day it is estimated that the contractors will have ample time in which to finish their work on the Northville structure. Once the work is under way on the upper part of the bridge it will be pushed rapidly to completion.

As soon as the work on the structure itself is completed the contractor will then turn his attention to reconstruction of the approaches on both sides of the bridge. These have to be resurfaced with maca-

dam pavement. This work however, will consume but a short time. Within a short distance from where the new bridge is being constructed gangs of workmen are employed razing the old steam station of the F., J. & G. railroad. The work is being done at night.

Measurements taken at the Conklingville dam yesterday disclosed that the water behind the huge structure has risen to a level of 729.8 above the level of the bed of the huge lake which is 724 feet above sea level. That is in the 96 hours that the gates have been closed the water has risen about five feet eight inches above the normal flow of the Sacandaga reservoir.

All computations of the depth of the water in the lake is to be based on 724 feet which is zero. The present reading of 729.8 feet is still a long ways from 760 feet which engineers estimate will be reached some time during the Summer.

From now on the rise in the lake will not be so apparent because the water will spread out more and more over the level flats between Northville and the dam. Every-

thing on the site to be flooded by the reservoir up to 750 feet has been demolished and removed.

While the weather was unreliable, the roads were in terrible condition and passage through the flooded area is uncertain, at least 3,000 people in autos made the trip to the dam over the week end. This will give some idea of the number that will eventually make the trip through the Summer months when the roads become passable.

Visitors over the week end at Batchellerville were given a rude surprise when they discovered the old covered bridge there had been burned. Workmen now engaged in building the new bridge burned the old one so that residents on various sides of the river have no way of getting across except by going miles around the reservoir.

Section is Cut Off

The removal of the bridge cuts off one section of the northeastern part of Fulton county and there is considerable ill feeling being shown in this locality just now.

The new Batchellerville bridge is well under construction and contractors are making good progress. The piers have been built and some of the trestle work has been done, but the bridge is a long way

from being ready for use.

Amusement Park burning. Old road from the park and railroad bed



Sacandaga Park beach as I remember it. Late 40s early 50s