WRITINGS OF
JAMES REEVES
Palmyra's First Historian

Compiled by Betty Troskosky
For
Palmyra's Bicentennial 1989
Digital entry
By
C. Deys

PREFACE

James Reeves, Palmyra's first historian, was born in 1811 on the Harris Road, a short distance from the North Creek Road. It seems appropriate that in the 200th anniversary of the formation of Palmyra , we publish a collection of his writings of just what life was like back then.

His father, also named James Reeves, was one of the first pioneers of the Long Island settlement to come to Palmyra in 1792. His father's brother Elias had first scouted out the territory and, finding the trees and vegetation lush, thought this was a good place to emigrate to. He carved his name on trees as pre-emption marks, then encouraged his family to come to Palmyra to start a new, and adventurous life along the Ganargwa Creek.

Besides James, the elder and Uncle Elias, there came Uncle Paul and their families, and Grandfather Stephen Reeves. Elias and James, the elder, who was married to Mehitable TReeves, bouth lot 16 which is on the Northeast corner of North Creek Road and Harris Road. They all later were active in building and serving their first church, a Presbyterian Church, build under the guidance of Paul Reeves who was a millwright.

As our historian grew up, he heard so many times, the tales of the migration from Long Island, the clearing of the dense forest, the planting of corn and wheat between the stumps, etc., he decided that someone should write these tales down so that future generations would know what it had been like. However, it was not until he was 60 years old that he did it. Then he wrote a beautiful, sensitive column in the old Palmyra Courier almost every week, starting in July 1871. He didn't give just names and dates, but wrote about the forests, and wild flowers and wild fruits. He wrote so pictorially about the beauties, the camaraderie and helpfulness of all the citizens, it leaves you with the feeling that you wish you could have known him. It is presented here with the same typical expressions, punctuations, etc. as were used in his generation.

The Reeves family's log cabin was on the same site, or very near, where now (1989), the home of Jack Haight family on the Harris Road is. James went to No. 8 school at the corner of North Creek Road and Harris Road. The Terry Anders family live in the same school, now modernized.
The John Wildey family live in the house on the Northeast corner of North Road in the house that Elias Reeves' son Lyman built, all on Lot 16.

When James was 24 years old, he married Caroline Sanford, daughter of Luther Sanford, another pioneer, whose lot was the last one east before the Arcadian line, on the north side of the Ganargwa Creek which formed the boundary of all the lots going north or south. Like most couples then, they started out in a log cabin before they built their lovely home illustrated here. This house was on the south side of the creek.

They had a wonderful marriage in spite of tragedy when they lost their three little girls to illness. The first two were their own. They died in their infancy. Later they adopted the third little girl, but she also succumbed to illness. Such ill fortune could make or break parents, but they were strong.

They owned a large farm, most of it across the road from their house on Tellier Road near the Arcadian line, lot No. 25. James was on the Board of Supervisors of Palmyra. He later became a Justice of the Peace, but he considered himself primarily a farmer, but he was an author too.

At the end of this writing, we are including some newspaper clippings of some of the major events in his and Caroline's life. They show how well respected they were in our community.

Some more recent histories of Palmyra have contained quotations of James Reeves' writings, notably those in Willard Bean's "ABC's of Palmyra", and "Palmyra, New York", written very professionally by the Women's Society of the Western Presbyterian Church. Then there was that of Mrs. Alice Benjamin, a highly loved and respected History teacher of Palmyra High School. She wrote her History in 1969. However, it was published in the newspaper, the Palmyra Courier Journal. People are too inclined to be careless of saving every issue of newspapers with writings like these, and the paper is inclined to become brown and brittle. Therefore, the thought came that it might be better to produce James Reeves' works in booklet form that could be read comfortable in a chair, then passed on to a friend, and then saved for future reading when a question about history of the early days comes up. Then it can be saved for children and grandchildren when they want to look up something on this subject.

We hope you enjoy it.

July 28, 1871

ABOUT OLD NEWSPAPERS

Next to the face of an old friend is the face of an old newspaper. There is no record, no history that brings us in so close, communion with the events of past times as old papers. We turn to them from the glittering pages of classical literature, from the historic records of great men, whose lives have been given us by the gifted pen of the biographic student. We find among their time worn folios names that are dear to us —- thoughts unrecorded in the annals of time. Men who occupied the commoner walks of life: merchants, mechanics, farmers and others, who never stepped upon the platform of fame. They convey to us a daily record of events, portraying the most truthful picture of the past. Who can convey a better description than the eye witness? Who can give to the reading, thinking world a more vivid description or more graphic account of what is daily passing in our midst, than the news gatherer for the public prints? And after years have rolled their annual round and the great wave of times has swept generation away, covering their acts and their deeds in the obscurity of forgetfulness, what can create a more profound sensation to the searcher after information of the past relative to his or her immediate locality or country, than to draw from some garret or lintel the long neglected and well nigh forgotten file of old weeklies that have been carefully placed there by the hand of an antiquarian-loving parent? A short time since we made search among the cast off articles of our own households, and brought to light some interesting relics, of which we propose to give a short sketch. Of old papers we found a file of "The Providence Gazette and County Journal", containing the freshest advices, foreign and domestic — the first one bearing date Wednesday, November 22, 1780. These we do not claim are of any particular interest — for this locality was then only known to the Indians, who roamed through the wilderness of what is now western New York — but they convey to our mind's eye a true picture of the times in which they were published. This was during the darkest days of the Revolution. On the first page we find an article called "The Crisis Extraordinary, by the author of Common Sense." Thomas Paine was the well-known author of these articles — a man who did more to uphold the cause of American liberty than any writer of the age. We find in Appleton's Encyclopedia that his Common Sense, which was written in 1776, served the last link that bound the colonies to the mother country, and that the "Crisis" was read at the head of each regiment of Washington's army, inspiring the soldiers with new zeal and bracing up their flagging patriotism in the dark hours of disaster. It may be said that Paine was the writer; Robert Morris, the financier; Dr. Rush, the physician; Fronan, the poet; Trumbull, the artist; Alexander Hamilton, the statesman; Washington, the general; Patrick Henry, the orator; and Franklin, the diplomatist; of the times of the Revolution.

Among other items of interest contained in these papers is a letter "from a gentleman in camp", giving a full account of Arnold's treason and the capture of Major Andre. There is also late news from the army under General Greene, then operation in the Carolinas; "an act of Congress", erasing Arnold's name from the register of the army,

a letter from Arnold in defense of his treason; also a letter from Sarah Warren, of West Point, to Arnold, accusing him of fraud, and publishing his promissory notes, which she held against him for money borrowed to the amount of $10,000; a proclamation from General Greene to the inhabitants of the South; proclamations from the British Generals Clinton and Cornwallis; also naval intelligence and advertising. The last named presents the most curious features, so much space being used in advertising "almanacks". "Strayed or stolen" occurs often, wherein good liberal rewards are offered for the thief.

A prospectus of the Salem Gazette, with conditions, one of which is: "The Gazette will be printed on a whole sheet of paper, equal in size to the Boston newspapers". This was the first print in Salem. Elisha Brown advertises for the thirteen sheep, strayed or stolen. These sheep have pennymarks on their ears and short tails; and if stolen, thirty dollars reward will be given for securing the thief. Samuel Durfee offers one hundred dollars reward for a hound. One peculiarity of said hound is that he "barks very clear". One thousand dollars reward is offered by Noah Pratt for a stolen horse and the thief, providing the latter is brought to justice, but will give five hundred dollars for the horse. Said horse is nimble-footed and in good case. "Sentimentalists" are invited to purchase books of Welcome Arnold. Lost, on Friday, a small leather pocket book, containing a number of continental bills, some papers, a pair of stone earrings, an ivory-handled pen-knife and some rows of pins. The finder will be handsomely rewarded.

We might enumerate and enlarge on the foregoing but space forbids. We could add what is found on the margins of the last page of each number, announcing where and by whom the paper was published. "Providence: - printed by John Carter, at the Post Office, at Shakespeare Head, near the State House, where printing in general is performed with fidelity and expedition.

We propose to continue in our next writing to bring our readers down to the time of the war of 1812, and given a sketch of the earliest publications in Canandaigua, Palmyra and other village of Western New York, of which we have a great many old papers.

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August 4, 1871

ABOUT OLD NEWSPAPERS NO. 2

In our last number we gave a sketch of the Providence Gazette, dated 1780. The next oldest paper in our possession and one that was the local paper of this vicinity is the Western Repository, published at Canandaigua by James D. Bemis. In 1809 it changed to the Ontario Repository. In July 1811 it was called the Ontario Repository and Western Adviser, coming out in new dress and enlarged to a twenty column sheet. Among its authorized agents at that time we find the names of WIlliam Howe Cuyler and Joseph Colt of Palmyra, and Jacob W. Hallett of Pultneyville. In politics it belonged to the Federal party, was opposed to the Jefferson and Madison administration and the was of 1812.

From the date of 1780 to that of 1803, an interim of twenty-three years, very much of interest had transpired in the history of the county to affect the settlement of Western New York. the triumphant march of Sullivan's army that took place just prior, in 1778, had broken the much dreaded and powerful combination of savage tribes, known as the Iroquois of Six Nations, opened up this beautiful country and gave to the settler a feeling of security. When we began the first number of this article, we did not intend to digress from the subject of old papers; but we find that to do it justice, we cannot pass over a period of time in which there was no paper published in Western New York that was of local interest to the settlers of this vicinity, but of which we have some unwritten history that may not be out of place, and of interest to our readers.

In the year 1788 Nathaniel Gorham and Oliver Phelps made the purchase of lands known as the Phelps and Gorham purchase, of the state of Massachusetts and came to what is now Canandaigua, an Indian village at that time, and opened an office for the sale of their lands. In the summer of 1789, Nathan Comstock and his two sons, Otis and Darius, came from Berkshire, Massachusetts and brought with them a horse and several cattle. While on the journey and about fifteen miles from Seneca Lake, a young calf was added to the party, which Otis carried on his back the remaining part of the journey. All returned in the fall, except Otis, who staid (sic) with the stock through the long winter. In February the whole family came on, bringing with them Nathan Aldrich, Isaac Hathaway, Nathan Herendeen, ,Joshua Herrington, Welcome, Herendeen, John Payne, Abram Lapham, and Jacob and Levi Smith. These were the settlers of that town. It was during this year that John Swift and John Jenkins began the survey of what is now the towns of Palmyra and Macedon. The following year (1790) Swift who had in the meantime bought Jenkins' part of the purchase, made the year before by them, moved here with his family and built his house on the brook that now runs under the Gas House, and very near that spot. William Jackway, the grand and great-grandfather of those now living here was a hired man in the employ of Swift. Webb Harwood came next and settled on the farm now owned by A. J. Downing in Macedon. It was during the autumn of this year that Edward and Gideon Durfee came on foot from Rhode Island to visit their brother-in-law, Isaac

Hathaway in the new settlement of Farmington. On their return they passed down the creek till they came to Swift's landing, where they spent several days looking at the country, and in consultation with Swift, who was anxious to sell them land. They arrived home about Christmas, and in a meeting of the family it was agreed to emigrate to the new settlement. Accompanied by Isaac Springer they returned in March, 1791, and began a clearing between the hills, near the present residence of Captain Ira Lakey. They were followed by the whole family; also Humphrey Sherman, Weaver Osband, and William Wilcox, then young men. They came in wagons to Schenectady, where they bought one and hired another Durham boat, with two crews (a crew consisted of a captain and four men) with which they came to Fort Schyler (Utica) which then consisted of a fort and a few houses, up through the new settlement of Whitesboro to Fort Stanwix, near where Rome now is. Here the boats were drawn across to Wood Creek which empties into Oneida Lake. The place of debarkation, though only 25 miles from the lake in a direct line, is over sixty by following the stream, which is very crooked, and at that time was filled with the logs of felled trees, placed there by the Americans to impede St. Leger's army in 1779, by obstructing his boats, he having come in from Lake Ontario and Oswego River. On Sunday, June 23rd, they arrived at East Palmyra, where they came to a standstill, owing to the great accumulation of driftwood in Mud Creek, and two of the crew were dispatched to look for the settlement. They found the boys who bought them through, landing at the mouth of the brook that pases under the road near where the rope walk used to be, just as the sun was sinking into the vast forest that lay to the west. Pardon Durfee, who came through with the cattle, had arrived several weeks previous. He followed the old military route to Seneca Castle, and from thence came across striking the creek on the farm now owned by E. D. G. Briggs, where he found a new log house erected by David Wilcox, who with his family had just come in. Here he enquired the way, and also got a bowl of samp (samp is a porridge made of coarse hominy) and milk, being nearly overcome by fatigue and hunger. It was getting dark. He went out on the hill above where now is the Erie Canal, and called loudly to his brothers across the valley. They hearing, came to is relief, and though the water was high in the creek, succeeded in getting the stock across safely. The Durfee family arriving here at that time were the parents, Gideon and Anna. Job, Gideon, Pardon, Edward and Stephen, sons, and Mary, Hannah, Elizabeth and Ruth, daughters.

The year 1792 brought the families of the Long Island colony, settling in East Palmyra. Foster, Reeves, Sanford and Hopkins are yet familiar names in that part of the town. In 1789 the western part of what is now Wayne county was called Tolland district. The first district or town meeting was held at the house of Gideon Durfee, the first Tuesday in April, 1796. The names of those chosen to offices will give the reader an idea of the first families in the settlement; John Swift, supervisor; Jonathan Warner and Humphrey Sherman, assessors; William Porter, collector; NOah Porter and Thomas Goldsmith, overseers of the poor; Jared Comstock, Reuben Town and William Rogers, commissioners of highways, James Bradish and James Reeves, constables; James Reeves, John Hurlbut, Joel Foster, Festus Goldsmith, Edward Durfee, Luther Sanford, David Warner, Benjamin Wood, Abner Hill, Cyrus Parker, Thomas Hamilton, Henry Lovell,

Norman Merry, Nathan Harris, and Jacob Warner, pathmasters; David Warner, John Hurlbut and Elias Reeves, fence viewers; Isaac Killy, poundmaster.

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November 3, 1871, no column in old Courier Journal
August 11, 1871, whole issue of paper missing from files
August 18, 1871, no column in paper
August 25, 1872, no column in paper

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September 1, 1871

ABOUT OLD NEWSPAPERS NO. 4

The name of General John Swift is connected with every first work of the settlement of Palmyra. He was a man of great energy and determination of character. When he made his land purchase of Phelps and Gorham, he had not the means wherewith to meet the payments as they came due, and we find that the Long Island colony negotiated with them for their land, though afterward taking a deed from Swift to secure a good title. When Gideon Durfee came he brought the hard cash and paid down for his 1000 acres, which enabled Swift to secure the western part of the purchase. He sold from time to time off his lands until they were reduced to his home farm, of which Mr. Kent owns a part. He built the first wool carding machine, where the Wilson Bros. grist mill now stands. He donated the site of the first church built in this village, with the request that it might be a Union Church, that all denominations might worship therein. This church was built in 1812. Abner F. Lakey was the architect and master carpenter, and the original draught is now in our possession. It was burned in 1838, being at that time occupied by the Baptists. He also gave to the town the lot of the old cemetery, the most obscure spot in this vicinity, and where sleep his remains — where today the moss and lichens are creeping over a plain marble slab that bears his name and "Killed near Newark, Upper Canada, July 12, 1814, aged 52 years 25 days". Last spring I stood in the old burying ground of the beautiful village of Milford, Connecticut. It was thickly studded with grave stones, over which the moss had grown, obscuring the inscriptions. By scraping it away I found some that dated back nearly two hundred years. In one corner was a very large monument, reared in remembrance and covered with the names of those worthy patriots who suffered and died as prisoners on board the prison ships of Great Britain in New York harbor, during the Revolution. How fitting that the grave of

John Swift should occupy some spot in the new cemetery, and like those be honored with a monument commensurate with his deeds.

Notwithstanding John Swift was an energetic and laborious man, he died poor, and we who occupy the scenes of his early labors are reaping the fruits of his toiling hands. The summer of 1793 was one in which chills and fever prevailed to an alarming extent. It found the new settlers almost wholly unprepared for such a scourge, for the strong arm of the woodsman weakened beneath its terrible visitations, and very little progress was made to clearing the land.

Almost every house along the route traversed by the incoming settlers had become a hospital, where some had been left to struggle with the disease, while the more fortunate went forward to select the land and rear a cabin for their reception when the frosts of autumn enabled them to renew their journey. Gideon Durfee built a large log house, where George H. Townsend's new house stands. Here he kept a sort of tavern, it being the most commodious house in the town and a great resort for the new settlers. In 1796 Louis Phillipe, afterwards king of France, who was traveling through the country, being then in exile stopped here while on his way from Niagara to Philadelphia.

During the sickly season of 1793 the Durfee family, including the hired man, were 22 in number and 17 of them were prostrated with the fever. The female portion were all sick, and the wife of David Wilcox used to go each day from over the creek to assist them. She then had a baby named Mary, the first female born in the settlement, who afterward became the wife of Alvah Hendee. Stephen Durfee, the youngest, who was then a small boy, used to go to and fro and carry the child. They crossed the creek on the trunk of a large basswood tree that had been felled across the stream. Mrs. Wilcox was one of the noblest of the many noble pioneer women, and it is gratifying to know that during the long years that followed, the friendship was of that tenderness which suffering and privation only can produce. The basswood log was for many years the only bridge over the creek and had to be so high that boats could pass under, as the creek was by law a navigable stream to the junction of Red Creek, and no mill or bridge could be constructed to obstruct navigation. Wagons were then, but little used, and such a thing as a buggy or light carriage would have been as much of an object of curiosity as a railway coach thirty years ago. The Durfee burying ground, on the farm now owned by Ira Lakey, was that of a child of Gideon Durfee, and not that of James Rogers, as we said in a former article, as he was the first grown person.* (Probably why this story sounds so familiar is because succeeding historians found it appealing and repeated it in this histories. – Ed.*)**

This ground is now kept well fenced and yet contains the graves of many of the early settlers. Gideon Durfee, the first owner of the land, died September 12, 1814 and his son Pardon, who continued the possession, died April 28, 1828. The latter established the rope walk and carried it on till his death. He was for many years a Justice of the Peace, and a man universally respected. The following lines were written

by Charles D. Lakey several years ago, while contemplating the subject of which we write, and the situation and character of Pardon Durfee during his last days:

The Pioneer

In the heart of the grand old forest,
A thousand miles to the west,
Where a stream gushed out from the hillside
He halted at last to rest. He formed of the prostrate beeches
A house that was strong and good:
The roof was of reeds from the streamlet
The chimney he built of wood.
And there, by the winter fireside,
While the flame up the chimney roared,
He spake of the good time coming,
When plenty should crown their board;
When the forest would fade like a vision,
And over the hillside and plain
The orchard would spring in its beauty,
And the fields of the garden grain.
And tonight he sits by the fireside,
In a mansion quaint and old
With his children's children around him
Having reaped a thousand fold.

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September 8, 1871 - no column
September 15, 1871 - no column
September 22, 1876 - issue missing from records
September 29, 1871 - no column

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REMINESCENES (sic)

Dated September 39, 1871
Printed October 6, 1871

Correspondence of the Courier

Mr. Editor — A few weeks since, you gave your readers something about the early history of the vicinity, but I conclude that you have closed up, though I hope you may be induced to continue your articles. Forty and fifty years ago I did not think, nor care anything about the first settlement of the country; but in the latter years it comes often to my mind, and I feel thankful that Mr. Cuyler, of Pultneyville, in his letter of August 1st, has pointed out the way by which you can give a full and correct history. He says "the philosophy we preach is the communion of saints, now as in older times, and that revelations are received from the spirit world; from dear departed ones today as anciently".

Again he says; "our dear departed friends will open wider and wider and wider the doors of the celestial city". And now Mr. Editor, if Brother Cuyler will help you to communicate with spirits of their departed fathers and mothers who first settled this wilderness country, they will tell you how they suffered, and the many privations they had to endure. They will tell you that the first summer they had nothing but pounded corn and milk to eat; that when they could not find the cows, they had to go without any supper. They will tell you they had to go forty miles to mill, and of the shout that when up from hungry throats, when the old horse came bearing his precious load of meal. They will tell you that the first summer, they had plenty of corn fit to roast by the fourth of July; which has never been the case since. They will tell you that the first crop of wheat the Durfee's raised, was where the old orchard of Captain Lakey's now stands; it grew but two feet high, and in consequence of the drouth, not more than half the head ever came in sight, out of the husk; but it proved to be a good crop. They will tell you that on the east part of Pardon Durfee's flat, was a hollow buttonwood tree, thirteen feet in diameter, a part of which James Rogers used for a shoe shop; the shop stood about seventy-five rods south-east of where Mr. Spencer now lives. They will tell you that one of their number "logged" ten acres with nothing to eat but potatoes and salt; had no help except an old horse, and shook with the ague very day. They will tell you that one of them chopped in six weeks, ten acres of heavy timber where the village now stands, for which John Swift gave him one hundred acres of land. They will tell you that when Judge Rogers moved his family to this town, it was in a sleigh, and they consisted of his mother, three sons and three daughters; that somewhere west of Albany, they came up with three young men near the top of a hill, the old lady told them if they would see her safe down the hill, she had three granddaughters on the load which they might have for wives, they went safe down and the three young men, Noah Porter, Samuel Spear and a Mr. Delano, married the three young daughters.

The spirits of these departed fathers and mothers might tell you, (if Mr. Cuyler is correct) a thousand things that will otherwise remain forever in the dark, to this and all generations coming.

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October 13, 1871

ABOUT OLD NEWSPAPERS, No. 5

The next farm east of Gideon Durfee's was that of his son-in-law Weaver Osband, who married his second daughter Hannah. It has since been divided into three farms ranging from 65, to 75 acres each; the center one being owned by Harmon Feller. Here the old house is yet standing which was built by Weaver Osband over sixty years ago. When the Durfee's moved from Rhode Island, they brought with them apple and pear seeds from which they raised seedlings; some of the trees are still standing on those farms. One of these pear trees, which was planted by Osband at the south end of his orchard between the hills proved to be an early summer variety, the same that is so widely known at the present times as the "Osband Summer". I remember the old tree well, as when a boy I lived on the adjoining farm, and one little incident connected with this tree is ever fresh in my memory. Twenty-five years ago this farm belonged to James Walton, an honest Yorkshireman who had formerly followed the son; a kind neighbor and one who always kept on good terms with the boys, though they used to take the liberty now and then to carry off the old man's pears on the sly, just as boys are apt to do even at the present day. He had a son Robert, whom the boys greatly feared, and who was often on the alert during the particular season of which we speak, in a cornfield adjoining the orchard and near to this tree. One evening a council was held among the boys; an expedition planned to "hock" some of those pears, and the writer being the youngest, was selected to shake the tree. All was quiet in that corner of the orchard as I felt myself "boosted" into the branches, by the strong arms of the largest boy of the party, and began to rattle down the luscious red-cheeked beauties. But here the scene changed. I heard a rustling in the corn; then quick low whispers, which were as quickly lost in hurried footsteps and the stentorian voice of "Bob", who demanded my immediate presence below. This new turn of affairs I thought was entirely uncalled for, though I knew the order must be obeyed, and with fearful forebodings I descended from the tree. I essayed by strategy to escape, but it was to no avail and a few minutes after I was laying across the stump of an apple tree, while my captor warmed me up right vigorously with his flat hand well laid on. I went home that night pondering over the story of Damon and Pythias, and how noble it was to suffer and endure for the misdeeds of my comrades. The old tree has long since succumbed to the crumbling hand of time, and my companions of that night's exploits, have some of them shared the same fate while the others are scattered far and wide. One resides in Burns, MIchigan, a well to do farmer; another resides in Chicago; another in LeRoy, NY, and others are lost amid the changes of our ever changing American life. For fifteen years the blue waves of the Pacific Ocean, have sounded their dirges over the last resting place of one of the noblest of those boy "companions", and the record runs: — He died at sea. But none have ever

brought disgrace upon the neighborhood that gave them birth, and the world may be better for their having lived in it.

The next farm east of Weaver Osband's was that of William Wilcox, who came with the Durfee's and married Ruth, also a daughter of Gideon Durfee. He Lived at the foot of the long hill, and a portion of the original farm is now owned by Mrs. Ellen Wilcox, widow of the late Philo Wilcox. The old Wilcox house was torn down only a few years ago. This farm consisted also of 200 acres and was purchased of John Swift. Adjoining this on the north was 100 acres for which William Wilcox felled ten acres of heavy timber for Swift, where George Jessup's residence now stands in the eastern part of this village. On the farm they lived and died, rearing a family of five sons and three daughters. William Wilcox was a man of great physical force, and did his share in opening up the new settlement. He was also a tender hearted man, and a true friend in time of sickness of affliction. In 1812, his oldest son Earl, who is still living in Marion, entered the army and took part in the struggle on the Niagara frontier. When the time came for him to leave home, his father said: "Earl, if you get hit, fall with your face to the enemy". He could not endure the scene of Earl's separation from his mother and wandered out over the farm. In vain did Pardon Durfee call to him to come back; he felt the sorrow that thousands of parents have since been called to endure, and who can realize better than words can tell, what must have been his feelings at that time. William Wilcox's farm of 200 acres was deeded to him December 21, 1791, for which he paid $125; the 100 acres for which he cleared the land on the present site of the village joined this on the north. Weaver Osband's farm of 200 acres was deeded to him September 8, 1791 for which he also paid $125. Four sons and two daughters of William Wilcox are still living. Of the former is Earl Wilcox, of Marion, Durfee of Sodus who is our present County overseer of the Poor; and Gideon and Hiram of our own town. Of the daughters Marybe Hicks resides with her son at Battle Creek, MIchigan, and Ann resides with her daughter, Mrs. Ruth A. Jones at LaCygue, Kansas.

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November 3, 1871

OLD NEWSPAPERS, No. 6

Where the old Palmyra depot now stands, was formerly an orchard and garden which, within my own recollection, belonged to Mrs. Sarah Grinnell. Red Creek then occupied its original channel, and just in front of the present freight depot, was a bathing place where the boys used to resort, to swim in its clear water, deeming it much better than the turbid water of Mud Creek. The first building erected there, was a log house, put up by Zebulon Williams, where for several years he lived and kept a store. He was the

father of Richard Williams, and came from Seneca county. The store stood very near where the east water house now is, and when William returned to Seneca county, about 1805, William Cook converted it into a cooper shop, where he made whiskey and pork barrels. In later years a furnace was carried on there by Gregg & Chase. This furnace was afterward burned down and then it was used as Grinnell's garden; I remember the blackness of the soil that marked the former site of the furnace. Job Durfee bought of John Swift 300 acres March 7, 1792, for which he paid 75 cents per acre. The west line of this farm commenced where the creek bridge now is, and running north through the present site of Mr. Crain's barn, formed what is now the west line of the Ennis farm. He built his house where Mr. Ennis' now stands, and his brother Edward built the large house to the east, which has recently been repaired and improved, though the same frame is still there. Job Durfee married Susannah Burden, and died in Palmyra 1813. His son Job settled in the north part of the town on the Marion road, where several years ago he built a stone house, and died shortly afterward: some of the other children are still living in MIchigan. The next farm north was settled by Pardon Wilcox where now the farm of P. H. Norton and Jeremiah Phillippa, Nathan Parshall and his son, now lives; farther on comes Paul Goldsmith*

(*NOTE: research shows that Thomas Goldsmith came to Palmyra in 1792 and bought three farms: this one of Paul's and one south of this on Lot No. 86 where he and his sons Festus and Isaac lived, and on on the corner of the Floodman Road and the East Palmyra-Port Gibson Road, Lot No. 67 where his son Thomas II lived.)

Where the school house is, and where several of his children continued to reside. Next was Tyler Stafford, where Martin Winslow lives. Farther north to the town line was mostly owned by Humphrey Sherman, who was considered one of the wealthiest land holders in the new settlement and who lived in East Palmyra.

Isaac Thayer settled the farm now owned by C.C.B. Walker, which joined Job Durfee's on the west. Taft settled the farm now owned by Norman Lapham; he was killed by lightning in 1799. Being out in a rain storm he sought shelter under a large tree in the forest, when a stroke of lightning struck the tree, tearing off a large limb which fell striking him on the head and killing him instantly. This farm was first purchased of Swift by Nathan Harris.

The early settlers who first came and reared their cabins along the valley of mud creek, were almost without an exception men inured to toil and deprivation; men of strong frames and mighty wills; many of them had become hardened to the life of the frontiersman, by months or years spent in surveying or other active pursuits (sic), which called them far into the wilderness, and away from the habitations of men. Of this letter class was Captain James Galloway. Captain Galloway was in early life a surveyor, and assisted in the survey of the Phelps and Gorham purchase. He was present when they treated with the Indians at Seneca Castle shortly after Sullivan's campaign. When Swift came here and purchased, Galloway came soon after and bargained for the land he

afterwards cleared. He came here from Newton (now Elmira), where he had left his family and commenced clearing his land the 27th day of April, 1791. He brought some corn with him which he pounded in a stump mortar, as part of his subsistence, though he boarded with James Rogers most of the time, who had come on in February previous. (In a former article I said that James Reeves came in 1799. This was wrong; he came in February, 1791).

By the 6th of June he had two acres cleared and planted to corn, all of which he did alone, with no help. He then returned to Newtown where he bought two yoke of cattle, and a covered wagon, when he set out again with his family, a wife and two children, for their new home. He lived in his covered wagon until he had built his log house, which stood just east of the pressed brick house of his son, on the opposite side of the road. Here he labored early and late to clear away the monarchs of the forest, letting in the light of the sun to ripen the grain food of life and also the light of civilization, to give a ripening in the coming thousands that is plainly to be discerned in the difference between that age and this. Captain Galloway built the first mill dam on the creek, where George Harrison mill now is, and was obliged owing to the passage of a law making it a navigable stream, to cut a passage way through for boats. Paul Reeves was the millwright and did the carpenter work. Here was cut many thousand feet of ash, oak, whitewood and basswood, used in building the first framed houses. This mill was burned after it had run but two years, and rebuilt and in operation in just six weeks from the time of the fire. This not only showed great energy, but perseverance and a determination to succeed in spite of the elements, as the floods had partially destroyed the dam several times, which was quickly repaired. Howell Post settled the farm north of the creek where his son Stephen G. Post still lives.

As this brings me to that territory which belonged to the Long Island colony, I shall be obliged to leave it until some future day, when, if I can obtain the necessary facts, I will give sketches concerning the early settlement of that part of the town — The Long Island colony came from South Hampton, near the easternmost part of Long Island. South Hampton was settled years before by Puritans from Massachusetts, and the families who settled in this valley, brought with them many of the old Massachusetts Puritans. But it was good seed, and here it met with the Quaker from Rhode Island, the Baptist and the Methodist as they came pouring in and filling up the country, rough edges were made smooth, the strong characteristics of the one, met with the opposite of the others, and each became toned down to one common brotherhood, by sharing alike the privations and hardships they had to endure.

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November 10, 1871

OLD NEWSPAPERS No. 7

If we could look back in our imagination seventy-five years, and view the present location of so many fine farms, and also of our own beautiful village, we would doubtless be astonished beyond our present comprehension. If I could draw an ideal picture that would carry the reader back to the beginning of the 19th century, and place before him in graphic coloring the scenes and localities with which he is so familiar at the present day, dressed in the garb of nature's primitive handiwork, he would not only mark the great change that was taken place in the face of nature, but also in the inhabitants since that early day. The hardy yeomanry who came and filled these valleys, felled the great monarchs of the forest and made the wilderness blossom, bequeathed not only homes and lands to their inheritors, but the prestige of honorable names that follow in the footsteps of useful lives. The law of progression, though it moves silently, is nevertheless rapid, and time in its resistless march halts not to mark the changes that are constantly occurring, not only in our immediate surroundings, but also in our own habits, customs and manner of life. The intervening time between the year 1800 and today, seems but a few lustrums*, and yet it is plethoric with grand results, and has wrought rapid changes in our geographical advancement that may never occur again within the same number of years. Truly the wilderness is glad of those whose names and still known as being a part of that band of pioneers who first settled in this valley, and reared their cabins along these hillsides. In my research for facts connected with the early history of Palmyra, I have met with much conflicting testimony; in fact so much as at time to almost discourage any further progress; but I shall endeavor to give a truthful narration and any errors that may occur will be overlooked by the reader, for whose benefit only am I encouraged to continue these articles. The second generation of this vicinity is now nearly extinct; only here and there a few remain who (*a period of five years) have any recollection of the early settlers, except what they gleaned from hereditary history, and to them, if not to the younger class of readers, it may be a comfort to peruse in their declining years, any facts connected with the history of their ancestors. The land that now comprises the town of Palmyra, was divided to the purchasers in lots as purchased, each lot of which was numbered.

Beginning on the north side of Mud Creek at the Macedon line and proceeding eastward, I find that No. 1 was bought by Zebulon Williams, containing 100 acres; No. 2, Abraham Gallop, 100 acres. These two lots extended to the present road north from the brewery and took in Wintergreen hill. John Russel's purchase came next, including 200 acres (No. 3) and extended to the road east of F. Lakey's residence. Isaac Arnold next (No. 4) 100 acres now owned by Mr. Herbert. Next was Isaac Thayer, 200 acres which extended to the road at the depot, and included the farms of C.C.B. Walker and M.D. Beadle, also the lands about the depot. No. 6 was Job Durfee's (Ennis farm); No. 7, Edward Durfee's; No. 8, Pardon Durfee's; No. 9, Weaver Osband; No. 10, William Wilcox; and No. 11 was a small lot of 12 acres that was purchased by W. Goldsmith. This brings

us to the Long Island purchase and the first lot contained 100 acres. No. 12 was purchased by Robert Hinds which is at present owned by Lyman Reeves; the next No. 13, was bought by Howell Post and extended northward nearly to the town line (Marion); the southern part is now owned by Nelson Reeves, and S.G. Post a son of the original purchaser. Lot No. 15, 100 acres, was owned by David H. Foster, and No. 16, 400 acres, was the purchase of James and Elias Reeves. Jedediah Hopkins came next with 170 acres, being Lot No. 17; Reuben Stark, 170 acres, Lot No. 18. Lot No. 19, unknown, Lot 20, John Hopkins, 360 acres. This lot extended to the town line north. Lot 21, Seth Howell. Lot 22, Oliver Clark; No. 23 Moses Culver; Lot 24, by Luther Sanford, 450 acres, which extended to the east and north lines of the town and concludes the list of the Long Island purchasers on the creek, as their purchase did not extend to the south side. Lots 25 and 26 were on the south side of the creek, and belonged to Gideon Durfee and Humphrey Sherman. The road running south from the Churches at East Palmyra is on the division line of these lots, which contained about six hundred acres.

Continuing west on the south side of the creek, we come to Lot 27, 100 acres, owned by _____ Marsh, Lot No. 28 by Thomas Terry, also 100 acres, Lot No. 29, Elsha Satterly, 350 acres, the Saulsbury farm. Lot 30 Samuel Clark, 40 acres and Lot 31, J. Marhart, 29 acres. Here is where Hiram Foster lives, and his two sons H.J. and Joel. Lot 32 was purchased by John Sherman and contained a square of 100 acres that covered a portion of the west side hill of Hogback ridge, the north-west corner only touching the creek. His old log house was standing until about twelve years ago. The farm is now owned by Henry J. Foster and is mostly covered with orchards. Lot 33 was the farm of James Galloway while No. 34 was the Horton purchase. Lot No. 35's owner is unrecorded. Lot No. 36 was David Wilcox's 100 acres. His was the first house built in all the foregoing numbers; it stood nearly on the same spot as E.D. Briggs' house now stands. Lot 37 was the purchase of Thomas Goldsmith Sen., and containing 440 acres. It reached from the creek to the south county line, being nearly two miles in length. The next west was Jonah and Isaac Howell, 240 acres, which bring us to within the present bounds of the village. As the village boundaries extend to the Macedon line, this closes the list of purchasers on the creek, except within the village, which I will refer to hereafter.

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November 17, 1871

AN AUTUMN VISIT

We had the occasion recently to visit the home of our childhood; to tread again the soil made sacred by seasons of glass pleasures and aching sorrows, when in the thoughtlessness of a child, we were free from the cares and strivings of life's sterner

duties, and felt only at times, the touch of life's sterner duties, and felt only at times, the touch of sadness. How willingly our feet led us along the path we used to tread, thirty years ago, with our baskets to gather the fallen nuts from the hickory trees that overhung the spring, or rescued from its clear waters what chanced to fall in there, and as we did so, saw our faces reflected back from its limpid depths. The same trees are there today, and there, as in the long ago, the nuts are dropping. The same dear old hills are there, up whose steep sides we climbed so often to watch the dying of the day, and hear the music of simple husbandry, as it mingled with the toll of the distant church bells. We were not alone then; dear companions joined in the rapture of our glorious autumn sunsets; companions who now are scattered by the forces of life and the hand of death.

There too, stood the same old house in the valley, and though touched by time's defacing fingers, it still wears the form of long ago. But how changed is the face of nature; the hill is not so high, the valley is not so deep and wide and in its bed the little brook that turned our water wheels is dry. How pleasant to again visit these scenes. How the many little incidents connected with our boy days comes thronging back upon the memory, and with closed eyes we strive to shut out the interval betwixt then and now. But life moves steadily onward, and on this beautiful Autumn day.

"The corn is gathered in the woods are still,
A somber smoke hangs over the earth and sky;
The slant run rays are cheerful and yet chill,
Gilding the fields where buried glories lie.

We miss the flowers that bloomed so strangely fair,
Around our early home but yesterday;
We miss the music, filling all the air
From myriads happy as the sunlit day.

But more we miss you, oh ye sainted few,
Who faded from the summers long ago!
This visit brings us not again to you,
Who bloom beyond the blight of sun and snow.

Anon.

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December 1, 1871

OLD NEWSPAPERS No. 8

In one of our former articles we stopped at the western boundary of the Long Island purchase at the same time asking for information concerning the settlement of that tract. We are happy to state that our request has now been answered; and that we now are in possession of much early history, which has long remained unpublished.

With the permission of our readers we will give a chapter of earlier dates and incidents in reference to the first settlement of these beautiful surroundings. Prior to 1787, a lessee company had been formed on the Hudson with a branch in New Jersey with John Livingwton of Livingston manor as general agent to lease land from the Indians in Western New York west of the military tract. Calling a council with the Indians — after a cloud of smoke had gathered over the place sufficient to obscure the sun — and a few barrels of whiskey had melted stoical indifference into genial sociability, the Indians agreed to lease large tracts of the best land in Western New York to the company for an annuity in money, a blanket to very family and liberal supply of whiskey, firearms and ammunition. At the third session of the Legislature of the State of New York, Gov. Clinton recommended that the wild land in the western part of the state be added to the general government, to wit:

"Whereas the article of confederation and perpetual union recommended by the honorable Congress of the United States of America have not proved acceptable to all the states, it having been conceived that a portion of the waste and uncultivated territory within the limits or claims of certain estates, ought to be appropriated as a common fund for the expenses of the war, and the people of this State of New York, being on all occasions disposed to maintain their regard for their sister states, and their earnest desire to promote the general interest and security, as far as it depends on them are desirous of removing the impediments to its final accomplishment."

"An act passed the Legislature February 19, 1782, instructing the delegates in Congress to cede the western part of the state to the general government"

Article third of this transfer reads as follows:

"That all the lands to be ceded and relinquished by virtue of this act for the benefit of the United States with respect as to property; but which nevertheless, shall remain under the jurisdiction of this state, shall be disposed of and appropriated in such manner only as the Congress of the said State shall direct".

An act of Congress in 1787, prohibited individuals from buying or leasing land from the Indians — the company was dissolved. The general government ceded, and the State of New York acceded and deeded to Massachusetts, a tract of land forty-two miles wide west of preemption, and from the Pennsylvania line to Lake Ontario, Oliver Phelps and Nathaniel Gorham the representatives of a wealthy association purchased the said tract for $100,000. It is worth millions at this time.

Phelps, with a company started to take possession of and open the country to pioneers. He invited the Indians to meet him at Geneva, to establish friendly relations and agree upon the compensation necessary to satisfy them for the land. Phelps arrived at Geneva in June and received a message from the Indians that they had lighted their fires and pitched their tents at Buffalo Creek, and if he had plenty of tobacco and whiskey (the only articles that would penetrate and soften a wild, forest education) he could take up his moccasins and "travel the bush". At Buffalo he found a remnant of the lessee company bound to forestall, if possible, his treaty with the Indians. Phelps compromised With Livingston and Benton, giving them several townships of land, and then commenced the pouring out of the New England rum and molasses to the Indians — the effect was magical. He was a greater man than the father of the thirteen fires. His bowl was larger — it ebbed and flowed. Rum and molasses was an elixir that they had never soaked themselves with. The Indians would sell or give him all the land he wanted, it was worthless to them for it did not produce such fire-water — manifesting their kindness by offering to carry him back to Geneva on their shoulders. The fires of the third morning were dim when Phelps struck his tent, waved the stars and stripes, gave the Indians a parting salute, promised them a yearly visit and took the trail for Canandaigua.

The account of the treaty became a matter of history, has been published and republished. The principle chiefs present were Farmers Brother, who said Phelps gave him a big talk, Cornplanter and Red Jacket were among the speakers, so was Brant the half-breed with Sir Tom Johnson's mark. Phelps before returning to Connecticut employed Maxwell, who engaged Porter and Saxton to assist in surveying his purchase into Ranges and Townships, they commenced in September, 1788 and completed the survey in 1789.

Their starting point was on the Pennsylvania line, west of the preemption six miles. The towns were numbered as they proceeded north. At Sodus Bay, one of their number, Brisco, died and was buried, a cove in the Bay bears his name. In the second and third range of their survey, township No. 12 is to be found, which has been known by the name of Swift's town, and Tolland, but is now known as Palmyra.

Jno. Swift and Jno. Jenkins, a practical surveyor entered into an article of agreement to purchase of said township 12, with Oliver Phelps in 1790, and commenced surveying. They commenced two miles north of the creek on the Macedon line, thence due east to the Arcadian line, making the points on a black tree near the town line bridge; it was a bare line. They then surveyed the lots adjacent to the creek into one hundred acres, those back two hundred acres. The surveyors had a camp near the Harrison mill. One night when asleep they were fired on by four Indians killing a man by the name of Baker and wounding another by the name of Earl. Jenkins with his compass smote one of the Indians on the head; it had the same effect that Peter's sword had on the servant of the high priest. Baker was buried near by and Earl was carried by Jenkins, Ranson and Porter on a litter to the nearest house, which was John Decker Robison's, a few rods east

of the village of Phelps. Robison extracted the ball with his jack knife and a piece of bent wire.

Ranson and Porter stayed at Robison's to take care of Earl; he recovered; his face was scarred; the bridge of his nose was broken; he spent the winter of 1802 in Palmyra. He was a local historian; tinged with romance; his wild adventures was an exhaustless theme.

The Indians were given up at Pickering treaty at Newton in July, 1791. As there were but two white men hurt, the chiefs refused to give up but two Indians. Their hands were tied behind them and a handspine tied so as to hold them together, and placed under the care of Northrup, an Indian trader, to take to Whitesboro jail for trial; before night they refused to go. He took their scalps, carrying them to Whitesboro and received his forty dollars.

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December 8 1871

OLD NEWSPAPERS No. 9

The summer of 1790 was spent by Swift and Jenkins in forming companies to effect a permanent settlement. A company was formed in Connecticut and Massachusetts; another in Rhode Island, but as they have been referred to in a former article, I will pass on and take up the Long Island Colony, and show how they came to erect their rude domiciles in this fertile valley. The increasing population of Long Island and the dangers attending sea faring life induced them to seek new homes in the far west, where in the pursuit of agriculture they might build up comfortable homes for themselves and their children. To effect this, they organized a company of eleven, in 1789, and appointed agents to go out and explore the country, even to the far away territory bordering on the Ohio river. In the spring of 1790, Joel Foster and Elias Reeves, acting as agents, proceeded to Fort Pitt in Pennslyvania, where they met Luke Foster and joining a company of woodmen, for safety, they penetrated the wilderness of Virginia to the Ohio River, down which they passed to Turkey Bottoms, now Cincinnati.

Finding a good soil, the country pleasant, and city laid out on the north bank of one of the noblest rivers on the globe, they purchased four acres and leaving their deeds with Luke Foster, who stayed to build a house, they returned to South Hampton, Long Island, fully expecting to go on with the colony at the opening of spring.

Shortly after their arrival home, they were invited by William Hopkins of New Jersey and Ebenezar Howell, both being members of the Leese Company. Hopkins had spent some time traveling in Western New York, gave a favorable description of the soil and its geographical situation was considered preferable to that of the Ohio River. Another strong inducement to settle here was, that the emigration from Massachusetts and Connecticut was tending this way, and like themselves were sons of the Pilgrim Fathers.

Acting upon the information already gained, the Company resolved to send five agents to make further explorations. Again Elias Reeves volunteered and in company with William Hopkins was to proceed west of the military tract, to look for a suitable place of settlement, while Joel Foster, Luther Sanford and Abram Foster, were to take a more southerly course along the south line of the state. Here they found the country rocky, mountainous and from what could be gleaned from travelers, very unfavorable for a settlement. Stopping at the south-west corner of the military tract at a place called Lindsley Town, they went to work erecting mills for Col. Lindsly; sending back word to let the other party know where they were; they not having started at the time. It was the 20th of August, 1791 that Elias Reeves and William Hopkins left Long Island with their knapsacks on their backs and a rifle to use in providing food while on their journey.

At New York they heard from the other agents and passing up the Hudson to Albany, took the northern route along the Mohawk. The journey was performed on foot, following the Indian trail through swamps and across creeks. They saw no persons after leaving the Mohawk until they reached the Seneca river. Here living with an uncle who kept the ferry, they found Alpheus Earl, whose shattered hand, scarred breast and broken nose had not fully recovered from the attack of the Indians, when in company with Jenkins he was sleeping on the banks of the Ganargweh (sic). Earl was well acquainted with the Phelps' purchase: he having assisted in the survey. He pointed them to No. 12, as a superior township of land. He gave them directions in reference to course and ranges, and what the different letters signified which they would find on the trees.

It was valuable information and they pressed on to Robison's in what is now the town of Phelps, where they stayed overnight. In the morning, taking a north-west course they soon found the range and followed it until they crossed the creek. There they found a post marked:

Tow N. 12; and ash tree, N12; E 15 Link from the post; a beech tree, N. 20, links from the post marked B X H, Tow N. 12, 1790; centre line of the town and east and west.

Rude as these letters were carved, they had a social, civilized meaning. It was the 4th of September, the month of loveliness and beauty, when they for the first time trod the ground from which the present generation, their children and their children's children were to spring; where they were to rear their habitations and construct their future homes.

There was a linitive* silence in every *linitive — soothing thing that bright September day, as they passed along; the great ash and elms stood on the flats; the oaks wained (sic) on the hill sides, the maples on the level, the clear springs were bursting out into small streams that found their way through the trackless forests, and all nature seemed dressed in its best primitive garb as though rejoicing at the face of the white man standing there in the presence of those grand old woods that have since succumbed (sic) to their axe-strokes. Elias Reeves and William Hopkins decided to urge the settlement of that tract; and there to bring their families, which, with those of their neighbors would build up a community where the Christian (sic) principles of the Bible might descent for their children even in greater abundance, than it had to themselves on the sandy beach of South Hampton.

They marked their names and the date of location on several large trees, after which they proceeded to Canandaigua, saw Oliver Phelps, found the title was good, and then set out in search of Lindsley-town to cenfer with the other party. Taking No. 2 range line, they followed it south by the blazed trees for a distance of sixty miles, keeping accurate account by the trees and stakes found every six miles which marked the townships. The journey led them over large hills, through wild, rocky and romantic country that looked as though nature in a mad freak had thrown it together for the habitation of wild beasts.

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December 15, 1871

After camping two nights, they found the settlement of Col. Lindsley who owned a whole township, and met with their friends, whom Lindsley was urging to settle near him. Hopkins and Reeves pointed to the valley of Mud Creek, and a bond was drawn by Luther Sanford in the following words:

> **"This instrument of writing witnesses; That W. Hopkins of the State of New Jersey, Elias Reeves, Joel Foster, Abram Foster and Luther Sanford, all of the State of New York, do agree with and bind themselves personally, each to the other, under the penalty of fifty pounds, to abide by and make good any purchase which Elias Reeves and Abram Foster shall make of Oliver Phelps, Esq., within twenty days of the date hereof; the proportion of land that each of us shall have is to be concluded on, among ourselves hereafter. In witness of which, we have all hereunto set our hands and seals, in Ontario County, State of New York, this ninth day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and ninety-one".**

This document was signed and sealed by each of us of the five, and, we need not assure our readers that each of us of the five, and, we each lived up to its conditions. Eighty-one years have passed since then and each of the signers of that bond have passed from earth, yet their descendants are to be found in nine different states of the Union.

William Hopkins being over sixty years of age, (the others were all young men) desired to return to his family. Elias Reeves and Abram Foster came back and closed up the bargain with Phelps. In returning they followed the west shore of Seneca Lake, passing rocky precipices and deep gorges, through which rushed the mountain torrents and after a tedious journey arrived at Seneca Castle where they found a man named Crittenden living in a wigwam. The Indian orchard at that place had so far recovered from devastation of Sullivan's army, as to bear fruit and Mrs. Crittenden gave them a peck of apples to carry to Mrs. Swift, who with her husband, John Swift, was living in a log house on the very spot where stands the blacksmith shop, at the foot of Main Street; the only house at that time within what is now the limits of the corporation of the village of Palmyra.

They enjoyed the hospitality of John Swift for the night. A part of the apples were offered them for their kindness, they declined them, only asking for the seeds which were given them. After walking up what is now Main Street in Palmyra, with John Swift, where the maple, the ash and the basswood were deeply rooted, listening to his ideas of the bright future, when a village with paved streets, and long rows of buildings, used for stores, with gardens and dwellings, in the background, would succeed those forests. They turned their course to the east quarter of the town; they had been instructed to look for a mill site; they saw one where a mill had been built which from the motion of the machinery shows they knew something about water power, the next thing was to find a place to plant their seeds, ascending a hill to the east they found an opening in the trees, here with flint and tinder, using their knife for a steel they struck fire and burnt a place in the leaves and planted the first nursery of Long Island Purchase. Having planted their seeds — which sprouted, and in a few years those that escaped the fire, were transplanted into an orchard that bore apples in 1789 — they descended the hill to the east, the beautiful valley of the Ganargwa lay before them with its wavering lines of upland rolling gently back, clothed in majesty on every side, the hills rising one above the other, were covered with lofty trees of a luxuriant growth; some loaded with vines bending their branches to the earth covered with unripened fruit, while here and there the sweet summer flowers bloomed brightly among the deep green of the surrounding forests. The creek wound its way around the hills through rich bottom land,, covered with tall reeds and bushes. It was a spot on which the eye might rest with pleasure and delight — they pursued their journey along the creek until they arrived at the east line of the town then turning to the north they passed through the center of the land they intended to purchase, crossing the creek on what was known for many years as Beaver dam, they were surprised at the ingenuity and industry that had been displayed by these animals, in erecting a dam and flooding acres of land, they passed over a tract covered

with wintergreen and sassafras, with wild flowers beautiful and rare, that had budded and blossomed, in that solitary place.

Having taken a general survey of that quarter of the town they proceeded to Canandaigua and purchased by Oliver Phelps the northeast quarter of township No. 12, 2 and 3 range in the Boston pre-emption; which contained 5500 acres of land, for the sum of 1,100 pounds current money of the State of New York — paying three hundred pounds down on taking a deed from Phelps and giving him a bond payable the next June for the balance. This being done they returned through Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York to their homes — like Joshua and Caleb, they carried a good report; not of a land flowing with milk and honey, ov vines and figs, but a country richer than sunny Italy — which they might leave to their children and their children's offspring might inherit it too the end of time.

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December 22, 1871

OLD NEWSPAPERS No. 11

Humphrey Sherman was born at Tiverton, Rhode Island in 1758, and at the age of twenty years, was married to Mary Durfee, who was born December 2, 1761, and as the record runs, "about the breaking of the day, it being the fourth day of the week." she was the eldest daughter of Gideon Durfee, who with three of his sons had settled here in the spring and summer of 1791. It is said that John Swift visited Tiverton during the summer of 1791, to induce others to follow the Durfee's and aid in the settlement of No. 12.

It was then and there that he met Sherman, who soon afterward started to visit the settlement, taking the southern route, via the south line of the State, arriving at Tioga point early in November. Here he purchased a yoke of oxen, wagon and cow. He had in his employ a young man named Isaac Springer, then only 17 years of age, also from Tiverton. He had formerly been on several voyages to the West Indies, and being of an adventurous turn, also wanted to see the wonderful Genesee country of which so much had been told, about its fertile soil and healthful climate. Having loaded the wagon with flour, pork, beans, corn and wheat, with a few cooking utensils and farming tools they started northward following the same trail that Sullivan's army came by, just thirteen years previous, until they arrived at Seneca Castle, when they continued in a north-west course, crossing the town line on the thirteenth day after leaving Tioga. John Swift and one of the Durfee's happened to be in that part of the town and were surprised at the sound of the bell that came tinkling through the forest. They walked in the directions from whence the sound proceeded and soon met Humphrey Sherman with an axe on his

shoulder, clearing the way for the wagon and livestock which were in charge of Springer. Tied to the hind end of the wagon was the cow wearing the bell, while by her side walked a young calf.

The meeting was a joyous one; for all had suffered hardship and dangers, and now they met far from their former homes, in an almost unknown wilderness, where the hostile Indian still roamed at will, and where they were to rear their homes of civilization. A common interest and like dependence upon each other, cemented the ties of friendship and made the bond enduring as time. Sherman was delighted with the beauty of the country as he contrasted the fertility of the soil with the barren rocks he had left at Tiverton, and was ready to pitch his tent.

It was like Eden to him; and when Durfee and Swift led him to the point of the hill near where now stands the beautiful East Palmyra churches, he immediately fixed upon that as his future home, and signed a contract with Swift for 1000 acres of land for which he paid $300 in hard currency. The weather was mild, and turning out the cattle to graze, they built a log house and barn under the hill near the creek, cleared a small opening and sowed some wheat. The log house was well banked and covered with rived oak shingles*, and a few sleeping and cooking utensils were moved from the wagon to the house and winter quarters established.

Their winter meats were salmon from the creek and deer from the forest. The monotony of solitude was (*rived — split) broken by the falling trees and social intercourse by frequent visits to James Galloway's, father Durfee's, or John Swift's. Shortly after their arrival they heard the old cow bellow and make a fuss as though in great trouble — the calf having been tied to a tree to prevent the cow from straying, and thinking a bear or wolf might be making a meal of the calf, they ran to its rescue, Sherman with his axe and Springer with his rifle; they found two Indians had got the calf in a canoe and were making a hurried retreat down the creek. Sherman rushed into the water and with one blow of the axe made a hole in the canoe, after which he laid his heavy blacksmith hands on the frightened Indians and pulling them under water almost strangled them. So rapid and powerful were his movements, that they were glad of the opportunity to put a long distance between themselves and the big "pale face". One morning while hunting, Springer discovered a fresh-made horse track; he called to Sherman, who joined him, when they followed the track until they came to a wicker stable with a thatched roof in which was a horse; this was near the south end of a "hogback" ridge and on the east side. Their curiosity was aroused and searching they found a log cabin on a knoll, in a dense thicket, not far from the same spot where now stands the residence of Mr. Charles Curtis. Sherman never knew fear, he knocked on the corner of the cabin, the buckskin door was drawn aside and a man dressed in a hunter's suit, saluted them, at the same time asking the newcomers where they were from and how long they had been in the country. They were also invited to enter the cabin where they found on one side valuable packages of furs; on the other side a rude seat which the newcomers were invited to occupy. Sherman asked the hunter his name. William

Fleming was the prompt reply. "How long had he resided there?" "Nine year". "Where do you market your furs?" "Send them to Canada by traders."

He said that he was a wealthy farmer; was well educated, and when they asked why he was so secluded from the world, he said that was a tale that would rival a Spanis romance. He said he had seen but few white men, and the Indians had been very kind to him. He spoke with raptures of the glorious roving life he led, as free as a bird, ranging the forests untrampelled by the restraints of civilization. He disappeared from the country two years afterward and what became of his was never known by the early settlers here.

The facts concerning William Fleming, were obtained years ago of Isaac Springer and Cooper Culver, who had often visited him in his forest home.

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December 29, 1871 - no column
January 5, 1872 - no column
January 12, 1872 - no column

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January 19, 1872

OLD NEWSPAPERS No. 12

In looking over the facts connected with the early settlement of Palmyra and her sister towns, we are let to enquire: What was it that first guided the early pioneers to this region? Why was it that such rapid progress was made here, while many counties to the east of us were almost entirely overlooked? It is no generally understood that a large portion of Central New York, was set off by legal enactment, and designated as the preemption tract, the western boundary of which was the 77th parallel, and crossed the boundary line of Pennsylvania 82 miles west of the north-east corner of that state. This tract included the present counties of Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Tompkins, Tioga and a part of Schuyler, and at the close of the Revolution, Massachusetts claimed a portion of what is now New York; but not until December 16, 1786, was a final settlement effected, which took place at Hartford, Connecticut, by a meeting of commissioners appointed by the respective governments of these states when Massachusetts relinquished all claims to New York, west of her present boundary, while New York deeded to her all the lands

lying west of the Military or preemption tract. As we have before stated, a certain portion of these lands were purchased by Phelps & Gorham, who in 1788 secured a treaty with the Indians, a survey of the tract, and in the following spring opened a land office at Canandaigua. Oliver Phelps had been a soldier in the Revolution and that capacity had fallen in with several officers of the command of General Sullivan, who during the expedition of his army against the Indians, that then inhabited this region, had seen with delight this beautiful country, and were waiting its development, that they might come here and establish homes. The preemption line which formed the eastern boundary of Phelps and Gorham's purchase, was run by compass from the south line of the State to Lake Ontario, and owing to a variation of the needle, it touched the lake about four miles west of where it was intended, thus forming a *gore between their lands as surveyed by them, and the preemption tract. This line passed through what is now the village of South Sodus and a cluster of houses a few miles west of Sodus Point, where the lake road crosses Big Salmon Creek. All of Wayne County west of his line was in the survey of 1788 and was run out into townships, which were surveyed into lots and numbered by their respective purchases.**

***a triangular piece of land**

Phelps & Gorham had intended to have established themselves at the Indian village of Kanadesaga (where Geneva is now) but this line, as run out, had cut them off, and they settled at Canandaigua, reserving that township to themselves. The approach to that place by water, was up the Mohawk and other rivers to the outlet of Canandaigua lake; and the head of navigation for boats was where the village of Manchester now stands, and where a log store was erected in 1788. In May, 1789 General Israel Chapin came, with a party of others, and took charge of land sales and surveys as the agent of Phelps & Gorham.

Col. John Maxwell was the surveyor, who under contract ran out the lines of the towns, and who during the winter of 1788-1789, cut a road from the present site of Geneva to Canandaigua; the first road in Western New York, while the second was from Manchester to Canandaigua. It was in 1789 that the Friend's settlement was begun in what is now Farmington; which we gave an account of in a former letter.

During the next year a man named Robinson came and settled near the head of navigation, on the outlet, and subsequently purchased a large tract of land which included the hill known as Cummorah, by the early MOrmons, who claimed to have unearthed the "Golden Bible". Robinson had been a soldier and through the representation of his comrades had been guided to this section of the country. And here we desire to relate an incident that happened about the year 1825, to show a characteristic of the soldiers of the time.

Jotham Forbes had served seven years in the Continental army; he was with Washington throughout the long struggle for Independence and shared in all its privations. Sometime about 1815, he moved from his Massachusetts home to York, Livingston County, and at the time of which we speak, was on a visit to some relatives residing in this town. In company with several others he visited the Cooper farm, on the Canandaigua road not far from Robinson's; and while walking over the fields he saw a man crossing an adjoining lot, when he was observed to stop and watch the man. Soon he spoke saying: "If Bob Robinson is alive, I should say that was him". One of his neighbors being of the party, spoke up suddenly, "It's the very man". All were surprised and began to wonder how he should know him. They called to him to come over and the two men approached each other. As they met, hands were extended and an immediate recognition took place; such a recognition as is seldom witnessed. They went to Robinson's house and for two hours these old veterans recounted to each other the scenes through which they had passed. They had shared the terrible sufferings of the winter of 1777-1778, at Valley Forge, and in the following June had stood shoulder to shoulder on the burning of Monmouth. After a lapse of over forty years they had again met; but this time in the quiet fields of home life, beneath the blest influence of a free government that their hands had aided to establish.

Both of these men have long since gone to their reward in that better land and it is not improbable that they know each other there.

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January 26, 1872

OLD NEWSPAPERS No. 13

In tracing out the history of the early pioneers, we find some names among the first comers, even as early as 1789 or 1790, that shortly after disappeared and we do not meet with them again until many years after. This can be accounted for in a variety of ways; though the great obstacle met here by the first settlers was the malaria of the swamps, causing fevers and ague; often crippling entire neighborhoods an deven changing the tide of emigration. According to the census of 1790, taken by General Hall, who was deputized to take the census of Western New York, there lived in Township 11, range 2, (now Manchester) only two men, named Ezra Phelps and Jonathan Sweet, and for township 12 there was no return which leads us to believe that Swift not at that time, arrived and that the census was taken in July or August.

By the kindness of Mr. Ezra Phelps, of Marion, we have before us a memorandum book or diary, kept by his father, Ezra Phelps, who was the same person enumerated in

General Hall's report of 1790. This book record was begun in 1790 and continues until after 1840. It is nearly complete in point of time, giving something each day of nearly an entire lifework. It is in a remarkable good state of preservation and each entry is — after a lapse of nearly eighty years — almost as plain as print.

Ezra Phelps was born in 1758, and married in 1784. About the first of June, 1789, he started from his home in Westfield, Massachusetts, to visit the Genesee country in company with several of his neighbors. They came up the Mohawk in boats and across to Wood Creek; down that stream and across Oneida Lake to three rivers. They followed Seneca river and crossed Crusoe Lake on the 7th, continuing up the river until night when they camped in the woods. They passed the Salt Springs (Montezuma) about 10 o'clock of the 8th and turned into what he calls Canadocqua Creek, now Clyde river. After poling their boat six miles, they met some men who said they could not get to Canadesaga, (no Geneva) by that route, so they turned back to Seneca River. Passing Cayuga ferry on the 9th, they arrived at Geneva and stored their loading and the next day Ezra Phelps traveled to Canandaigua on foot. On Sunday, June 21st, we find him at the cabin of William Miles, on the Genesee river, not far from where Avon now is, the first day of rest since leaving home. From this time until July 4th, we find his traveling to and from Geneva carrying provisions to the small camps of Colonel Taylor, Dewy & Tiffany and others. In one of his trips he discovers a wonderful spring, the smell of which is like the smoke of burnt gunpowder. He says it was a large spring, the water was cold an dhad the taste of brimstone and sulpher; that he found it to have a quick operation on his brass buttons and silver change, making them black. He thought large quantities of brimstone might be collected there, and took some with him to Tiffany's camp. He closes his account by pronouncing it a wonderful spring.

Little did that daring pioneer think, as he examined his wonderful spring that even within the lifetime of his own children, thousands would flock there to partake of its healing waters, and among those same lofty basswood trees, beautiful and costly buildings would rise, winding walks be laid out, an drastic seats embowered mid trailing vines, would give rest to the invalid and comfort of the afflicted.

He celebrated the 4th July by putting a handle in his axe, and with that he assisted Stephen Dewey in clearing land. He made a bargain with Phelps Gorham for some land and took a bond of them. He cleared burned and broke up a patch and sowed buckwheat, hiring a negro to help him in his work. On the 29th of July he washed his clothes and hired an Indian to assist him in making a canoe which was to bear him back to his home. On the 30th the canoe was finished and he set off for home and went as far as John Decker Robinson's, near where East Vlenna now is; his negro accompanied him on the trip an dthe next day they arrived at a deserted log house, at the carrying place on the outlet, where they put up before night, on account of heavy thunderstorm. The next day they reached Crusoe Lake, the storm was so great they could not cross and they laid under the canoe for shelter.

The next day they went to Fort Brewerton on Oneida Lake, and set out in the night to cross; but, after going five miles were obliged to land as the wind was so strong from the east. The next day, August 3rd, went about four miles when the wind stopped them and they lay in the woods that night. August 4th they reached Wood Creek and got up as far as Oak Orchard. The next morning some boats came up with them when they left the canoe and went aboard one of them, and continued with them to Schnectady, where they put up at William James'.

Here Ezra Phelps slung his pack and started on foot for Albany, lodging the first night a few miles from that place. He arrived safe at Westfield on the 11th of August 1780 after an absence of a little more than two months. On the 13th of the next April he set out in company with his brother Stephen while his brother Joel was to drive them to Schenectady with a wagon and then return. They arrived there the 17th and put their loading on board Enos Boughton's boat and started in company with two other boats. At the carry place to Wood Creek they stopped and baked a batch of bread. On the 4th of May they reached Mosquito Point and the next day McKentry's block house on Canandaigua Outlet. On the 5th while in the Cayuga march they killed a bear that was trying to swim the river.

On the afternoon of the 10th of May they reached the Canandaigua landing near Manchester and stored their goods in Colonel Taylor's block house.

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February 2, 1872

OLD NEWSPAPERS No. 14

In our latest arcticle, we left Ezra and Stephen Phelps at the landing, which was the heard of navigation on the Canandaigua outlet and the very spot now occupied by Dr. Melvin, between Manchester and Shortsville. As we said before, they came in one of the boats of Enos and Jared Boughton, who came from Stockbridge Massachusetts, and purchased the town of Victor. During the preceding summer they had erected a log cabin an disown some buckwheat on what is now known in that town as Boughton's Hill. they had also surveyed the town and sown three acres of wheat after which the brothers returned to Massachusetts, leaving Jacob Lobdell alone through the long winter to see to the premises and take care of fourteen head of cattle.

In his voyage, of the spring of 1970, Jared was accompanied by his wife and infant daughter. Phelps says that on their voyage up the Mohawk, they experienced strong

head winds the greater part of the way. With high water and stormy weather; that when they reached Seneca River it was the highest ever known, owing to a great storm of snow that occurred on the 15th of April when the snow fell to the depth of twenty inches, which made it very difficult and slow getting along. What, if in this age of travel, we had to make such voyages as this from Albany, to be twenty-one days exposed to the weather in an open boat? What would mothers of today think of starting on such an excursion with their little ones? How different from the swift-flying train and the comfortable pullman car.

After storing their goods at the landing, the brothers Ezra and Stephen Phelps went to their land, which is now owned in part by Samuel Wilbur on the west side of the present road to Manchester village, and a little south of Mormon Hill, where they began to burn brush and clear the land for planting corn. Ezra then went to the Genesee river and purchased the seed corn and they began to plant the 22nd of May. Sunday the 23rd of John Tremain arrived, and on the 24th, Stephen killed an otter. During that week they planted corn, beans and pumpkins. On the 22nd of June they planted potatoes, which Ezra had brought from the Genesee river. From this time to the 16th they dug a cellar and girdled timber, when they began to hoe corn. On Sunday July 4th their house was up and there gathered around, and it it, great multitudes of small flies which continued to increase until the middle of the week, when they began to disappear. They began to harvest their wheat on the 28th of July and on the 30th Stephen was taken down with the fever and ague. On the 9tn of August, Dr. Adams came to see Stephen. They cut their grain with a sickle and finished it on the 14th day of August. On Sunday the 22nd, Stephen got so he could get out, and a deer coming near the door, he took down the gun and shot it. On the 20th of September, they had sown five bushels of wheat and then both were taken sick with the ague so they could not work, or barley help themselves. On the 7th of October they had the first frost which was hard enough to kill garden vegetables. Having in a measure recovered, they finished digging potatoes on the 20th, and on the 26th the snow fell to a depth of five inches on the level. On the 8th of November, they started to return to Massachusetts, and, after a slow tiresome journey in a canoe, they arrived at Schenectady on the 21st, and arrived at Westfield on the 28th of November. What a joyful return must have been that of these hardy pioneers? After an absence of more than seven months, a period spent among the then wilds of Ontario County, cut off from their friends ,with only now and then a chance for communication by letter, exposed to malaria of the swamps, which at that time threatened every new comer with lingering disease, if not annihilation. But the robust and healthy forms of these pioneers, though seriously affected by the prevailing fevers, stood the test and enabled them to begin work that in time reclaimed this rich domain from its solitude, and gave to the coming generation, a land whose fruits yearly gladden the hearts of the present occupants; a land that flows with milk and honey.

In the early part of 1792 Stephen Phelps returned to Manchester with his family, and not long after, purchased the lot on which the Palmyra Hotel now stands, where he erected a tavern after disposing of the land in Manchester. Ezra Phelps returned to this

section in 1800. Leaving his home March 17th and coming through on horseback in company with Henry and David Bassett. On the 26th day they arrived at Parkhurst's house two miles west of cayuga ferry, and the next day, after parting with his fellow travelers, he came to Palmyra and put up with Asaph Sexton. The 27th he went out to No. 13, (Marion) and found his father, who had come on the previous year. The 29th, it being snowy he tarried with Reuben Adams and Moses Blakesly, who went there two years before. It was this time that Ezra Phelps selected the farm on which his son now lives, and where in September following, he moved his family. He says that he left Massachusetts on the 22nd of September, an din nineteen days arrived at Stephan Phelps' tavern in Palmyra without meeting any serious misfortunes. He came with ox team and lumber wagon with cover. His first work was heaping logs, in which he was assisted by Martin Wheaton. Even at that day there were but few houses scattered here and there in the woods, with their clearings about them, with no bridges over the streams and scarcely any roads laid out. On the road which was cut through by Charles Williamson from Palmyra to Sodus, several years previous, the log house of Daniel Russell, which was about two miles north of Rueben Adams, was the last one, beyond this was a dense forest to within a mile of Sodus Point.

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February 9, 1872 - no column

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OLD NEWSPAPERS No. 15

The early settlement of Palmyra, as we before stated, began in September, 1790. It was during this month that John Swift came here with his family in a covered wagon, and began the erection of a house on the very spot where the blacksmith now stands at the foot of Main Street. Some of our oldest residents even now remember the ruins of the old house, the cellar of which was afterwards used in part as a pit for the hayscales that were placed there by Butler Newton some twenty years ago, and a part of the old pit is still remaining beneath the entrance of the east door of the present shop.

When Swift came, there was quite a ridge extending sling where is now the most populous part of the village and which is still to be found back of Mr. Allen's furnace and farther west. This ridge came to an end, forming quite a point on which Swift built his house. In front of and to the east, the little brook, which was then quite a stream, ran down through a ravine that is now filled up by the improvements of the streets in that locality. This creek passed through where Foster's shop now stands, and running to the

east of what is now Railroad Avenue, turned off and emptied into the creek, about ten rods west of the residence of Samuel Frost. Swift was not alone in the erection of his house; such men as John Henkins, Thomas Rogers, William Jackway, Webb Harwood, James Galloway and Daniel Ranson put their strong arms to work, wielded the axe, scored the logs and raised them into position forming the walls of the first house in Palmyra. They were Swift's co-workers in the settlement of this valley, and had at that time but just finished the survey of township No. 12.

How the forests must have rang with the axe-strokes loud and clear, that September morning, when Swift began felling the trees of the primitive forest! How cheerful the smoke, rising from the chimney of the finished house! What a cordial greeting that bright November day, when Gideon and Edward Durfee, with their packs on their backs, stopped at the cabin of John Swift! How gladly he "showed them around over his new purchase and his embryo village — for there was no doubt his intention from the start was to build up a village on the very site where Palmyra stands today. During the autumn and winter, Swift labored zealously in clearing land in which he was aided by William Jackway, and by spring he had succeeded in making quite an opening along the north side of the brook, extending from where the canal is, to the present residence of Joel Foster. Close under the bank, and about where the Vinegar factory is, he built his stable and housed his cattle. There was not cleared land to be found except a few patches on the creeks, and some of these he sowed wheat, and we are told, though it was sown on "burnt ground", and scratched in with brush, it yielded a good crop the next season. Swift selected his location in view of erecting a mill on the brook, as there seemed such a good chance for a pond, between the ridge where Main Street now is, and Prospect Hill.

It was only a short time after his becoming settled, that we find him building a dam on the brook, and forming what in after years, became a mill site of no small value, and which aided greatly in the early growth of the village. Shortly after, and even prior to Swift's arrival with his family, he began his land sales, and we find him as early June 10, 1790, joining Jenkins in a deed to William Jackway, of Chemung township, when they conveyed Jackway, lot 17, and one forty-sixty part of the entire township, amounting to about 500 acres, for fifty pound New York money. Lebeus Hammond and Lebeus Tubbs were witness to the contract. On the same day Jenkins deeded to Isaac Baldwin, for the same amount, lot 35, 100 acres and lot 41, 200 acres, also one-sixth part of his undivided lands amounting to nearly 500 acres.

On the 3rd day of August 1790, Swift and Jenkins sold 200 acres of land to Thomas Rogers, it being the same on which Rogers afterward lived and was no doubt, payment for service rendered in the surveys. Daniel Sawyer and James Galloway were witnesses to the contract. September 8th, WIlliam Rogers bought for 40 pounds of New York currency, 100 acres, where Edwin D. Rogers now lives. Park Allyn, Jr. and Isaac Lowell were witnesses, and the deed was signed by John Swift. During the spring of 1791, Jenkins and Swift made a division of lands: Jenkins relinquishing his claims to

certain lots in the west and north part of the town. On the 2nd of May, 1791, Gideon Durfee Sen., bought lots 16, 17 and 18*, containing 300 acres, for which he paid the hard currency, thus enabling Swift to meet his payments and secure his title to the township.

***Note: On page 49, it may be noted that Mr. Reeves made the statement that Lot No. 16 was bought by his father, James and Uncle Elias.**

May 19, 1791 Gideon Durfee, Jr., bought 700 acres in East Palmyra, for which he paid 160 pounds New York Currency. This purchase consisted of three 100 acre lots on the south side of the creek, commencing at the town line, and two 200 acre lots adjoining on the south, and we find the following year, Durfee sold the west half of the purchase to Humphrey Sherman, the deed bearing date June 17, 1792, for just on half of the original purchase money. In a former article we made an error in saying this purchase was originally made by Sherman. June 7th, 1791, Swift sold 200 acres to Humphrey Smith, it being lands now owned in part by Merit Sherman and others. December 13th, he deeded the creek lot No. 33 to David Wilcox, "a blacksmith", containing 100 acres for $75, "it being the same on which Wilcox now lives", as the conveyance reads. Wilcox settled on this land the preceding March. This land is now owned by E.D.G. Briggs. In the autumn of 1791 Swift built an ashery where the old tannery now stands, and in the spring of '92 Main Street was laid out, running from this ashery to the west line of the township, also a road to Canandaigua which occupied nearly the same route as that of the present day.

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February 23, 1872

OLD NEWSPAPERS No. 16

When Phelps and Gorham bought their purchase and established their land office where Canandaigua now is, they reserved a whole township to themselves with the idea of building up a large village on the shore of the lake, and to actual settlers they sold from time to time in small lots, carefully reserving the most available sites.

In like manner John Swift reserved the land where now our own beautiful village stand and only sold it in lots, keeping to himself but a small portion, and that not the most available part of the land covered with dwellings at the present day of improvement. This reservation was bounded as follows: commencing on the east, by the west line on Jonah Howell's purchase, which began at Mud Creek, a few rods east of the junction of Red Creek, and ran south to an off see (sic) corner of Howell's land, thence west along the north line of lands sold to Stephen Wilcox, Cyrus Foster and Joseph Colt, to the east line of William Jackway's purchase, then north along said line to Mud Creek, and down

the creek to the place of beginning. As we said before, Main Street was laid out in 1792, which was only clearing of logs, underbrush, trees and stumps so as to let an ox team and wagon through. There was no grading, graveling, curbing, paving or crosswalks. The beautiful wild flowers blossomed in quiet beauty and the chipmunks sent up his pre-cautioning signal of alarm where now stands the pleasant stores and shops that are daily visited by a busy population. In the spring of '63, a landing was established at the junction of Red Creek, which was considered the head of navigation and as quite a number of boats came up that season, Swift cut a road, or rather extended Main Street to that point.

The location of the street was different from that of today. It turned off just below Vienna Street and crossed the brook where J.P. Vail's barn now stands, entering Mr. Besley's garden, and then turning north passed not far from where the old canal bridge used to stand and keeping in almost a direct line to the landing. This landing for a time threatened to be of more importance than Swift's village, as Zebulon Williams established the first store there, trading with the Indians, sending his furs, etc. to Albany in his own boats and bringing back merchandise and trinkets, as well as now and then a keg of rum. But the location at the creek proved to be a bad one, as the fever and ague put a veto on its further progress. The spring of '93 also brought quite a number of settlers who bought land or at least built houses on Main Street. It was this year that Swift conceived the idea of reserving a lot for school purposes and the present old cemetery was set aside for that purpose and a school house erected thereon. This school house did not last long for in 1796 we find it gone, whether by fire, wind or flood we know not, but think it was the first mentioned. The land was reserved for a burying ground and the first church erected there in 1811. It was in 1793 that Chapel Street was laid out, passing over the hill and across the creek, being continued the next year as far as Nathan Harris' clearing which is the present home of J.S. Wright. About this time Swift began the survey of village lots, by running out a line of lots on the south side of Main Street, which were forty rods deep and sixteen rods front, containing four acres, in rear of these the land was run out in lots of ten acres each. The first sale of village property was to James Galloway, and was the first four acre lot west of the land included in the mill site and pond, which extended to and took in the present lot belonging to C.D. Johnson on Main Street.

Galloway's purchase extended a little west of the present Hotel and to what afterward was the east boundary of the Beckwith property, now owned in part by Calvin Seeley. Galloway bought this with the expectation of putting up a saw mill about where A. Sherman's paint shop now stands, but gave up the idea and afterward built the saw mill and dam, where Harrison's mill now is.

Stephen Phelps bought a portion of Galloway's lot and erected a tavern where the Hotel now stands. This was the first public house and was built about 1796. On the 13th of June of this year, Swift it seems sold out nearly his entire lands to Sarah Brockway for $2000, including his farm lot on which he lived containing 272 acres and extending from

near the site of the present Eagle Hotel, to Howell's west line and north and south from the creek to the Wilcox north line; also 8 acres on the north side of Main Street, east of John Russell's; and the lots to the west on the same side of the street, except three-fourths of an acre reserved on which the old school house stood, until it comes to John Hurlbut's lots, and also, thirty-two acres on the south side of Main Street next to William Jackway, being the four acre lots and two ten-acre lots, lying on the west side of Canandaigua Road, and the four acre lot on the east side of said road.

We find that this same purchase was re-conveyed to Swift June 8, 1799, for $2500. Captain John Hurlbut was one of the first settlers here; he came in 1795 and purchased lots of Swift on the north side of Main Street in the upper part of the village, now occupied by the widow of John Hurlbut, son of the former. John Russell was another first settler who came here in 1795 and bought the first lot east of Chapel Street which took in the present site of the Presbyterian Church, and extended to the east line of J.C. Lovett's grounds and north to Mud Creek.

When Cuyler and Fayette Streets were first laid out, the land between, fronting on Main Street, was divided into three lots owned by Stephen Phelps on the east, Joseph Colt in the middle and Theodatus Sawyer, a brother-in-law of Swift on the west. Sawyer sold his lot to Constant Southworth, who in 1806 sold to WIlliam Howe Cuyler, from whom the street was named.*

***According to Thomas Cook this lot started with 222 East Main Street, now occupied by Keith Kroh, and went west.**

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March 1, 1872

OLD NEWSPAPERS No. 17

In the winter of 1791 and '92, the Long Island Colony made preparations to establish themselves on their purchase. They had built a sail boat that would carry two and a half tons, no pains had been spared to make it a firm, substantial boat, fit for hard service. It was finished and launched on the first of April at the head of the creek, near Southhampton; the boat was loaded as soon as possible. On the 4th of April — that being Monday — and everything necessary for the journey closely packed, the first boat load, at 8 o'clock A. M., pushed from the shore and rowed down the creek to the great south bay, then hoisting their sails to the gentle breeze, they sailed out of the bay through Fire Inlet into the Atlantic Ocean shaping their course for New York, where they arrived on the third day and after recruiting their stores, they sailed up the Hudson to

Albany. On their way up the Hudson, they had the company of several boats, bound for different points in the great west, as it was then called. Apollos Cooper purchased and settled on the land on which the city of Utica is built, Silas Halsey went up the Cayuga to Ovid, Halsey was the first representative in Congress from Western New York.

At Albany the boat had to be taken from the water, and carted to the Mohawk at Schenectady, the distance of sixteen miles. At Schenectady, an old gentleman with a cocked hat, dressed in Continental style, advised them to sell or knock their boat to pieces and buy a batteaux, for their boat was too large to float in Wood Creek. Their coverage did not fail, Wood Creek must accommodate itself to the boat. Without thanking him for his advice, the boat was placed in the Mohawk, and with sails and oars they came up to Fort Stanwix, now Rome. Here the boat was again taken from the water and placed on rollers made of round logs for that purpose, and rolled over to Wood Creek, the distance of three-fourths of a mile. They placed their boat in the stream, to sue their expression, it was not shoe deep. There were five boats at that point bound west, ready for a start, one for the Cayuga, one for Palmyra, and three for Geneva. A dam had been thrown across the stream for the benefit of the boats, the gates were opened, the boats floated down the creek to Oneida Lake. the wind blew a smacking breeze, the rain fell in torrents, they were advised by the other boatmen to wait till morning for they considered it unsafe to venture on the lake; their boat had been in the Atlantic and some of them had passed the Gulf Stream and rounded the Cape of Good Hope. So taking advantage of the wind they sailed the length of the lake — twenty-one miles — in two hours and a half, came down the Oneida Outlet to a place that was known as Three RIver Point, then they came up the Clyde River to Mud Creek. They found the creek rapid at that season of the year, and the navigation obstructed by wood riffs, which they had to clear away, or unload the boat and draw it around. They came up the creek, to the place where they had marked their names, the September previous; it was near where the old stone school house stands in district No. 8; there they landed after a passage of 28 days. Tell of the great events of former generations, here is one almost without parallel, for they had been all this time in an open boat, exposed to wind and rain, often wading in the water to raise their boat over a log or some bar. Men of less enterprise, unaccustomed to hardships and peril, would have returned to their native home an gained their living in some easier manner. But they had a higher object in view; they lived not only for themselves, but for their children. It was raining when they landed, the boat was unloaded and drawn up the bank, turned upside down, so as to form a shelter from the rain, a fire was made to cook their supper, and dry their clothes, weary but cheerful, six strong men arranged themselves around the fire. Their names shall be inscribed: David H. Foster, Stephen Post, James and Elias Reeves, Abram and Samuel Foster, two females, Mrs. David Foster and daughter, who a few years after married Thomas Rogers, were the only ones. Clearing a spot and building a house was first in order. They had brought tools sufficient to build a log house, such as axes, saws, adze, grooved augurs and iron wedges. The tools were simple, but the rude dwelling of those times did not require many mouldings — they were built for convenience, not for show. Sided with logs, chinked and mortared to make them proof against cold; logs split and straightened,

sized and laid tight for the first floor, slide windows, to let daylight in, doors split from basswood logs, hewed and pinned on cleats that served as hinges, when opened their creaking produced a sensation equal to a door bell, roofs that kept them dry when it did not rain, such were the houses that dotted the valley of Mud Creek in their primitive items.

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March 8, 1872 - no paper

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March 15, 1872

OLD NEWSPAPERS No. 18

The first arrival of the Long Island Co., was a little more than a surveying parts, with the right to establish the claims of those interested. They had come from sandy plains and dwarf timber belts and now stood in a grand unbroken forest. Instead of being discouraged, the mind became elevated with the liberality of Providence, catching the bright side, as it measured the depth of the soil by the heights of the trees the sweetness of the flowers by the fragrance of the air, and the purity of the water from the clear gravelly fountains. While waiting for the surveyor, they made an opening among the trees to plant their garden seeds and a patch of corn.

William Ewing, the surveyor, in company with Joel Foster and others, arrived in June. they commenced surveying the tract by starting the east line of the town at an ash tree marked township twelve; thence north, two degrees and thirty minutes east, one thousand and eighty-one rods and forty links to township thirteen; thence eighty-seven degrees and thirty minutes west one thousand three hundred and sixty-four rods and thirty links; thence east following the courses of Mud Creek to the place of beginning; the tract was then surveyed by Ewing (who took field notes) into five hundred acre lots and drawn for.

David H. Foster drew number eight. It was divided between D.H. Foster, James Reeves and Rufus Foster. Elias Reeves drew lot number seven. Stephen Post drew lot number ten, when he gave to his sons Howell and George Post. D.H. Foster drew lot number one for Luther Sanford, Abram Foster drew lot number six which was deeded to Jedediah Foster May 5, 1801, by Elias Reeves and Abram Foster. It furnished farms for

Zenas Foster and Daniel Jagger. Elias Reeves drew for William Hopkins, lots number three, four and five. These were for Seth Howell, John Hopkins and Reuben Stark. Joel Foster not being present, D.H. Foster drew lot number nine for him, according to his deed dated November 10, 1800. Joel Foster sold eighty acres of lot number nine to Isaac Sweezey, May 21, 1801. Lot number two was drawn for Nathan Reeves; with a part of number three became the property of Moses Culver, Ben. and Oliver Clark. Lot number eleven was deeded by Elias Reeves and Abram Foster to Robert Haynes, Samuel Clark, George White and Benjamin Luce. Only fourteen of the original purchasers settled on their land the first ten years. It is clothed now with a hundred dwelling houses, four and a half school houses, one mill, one wagon ship, one blacksmith shop, one broom factory, and is worth at this time, four hundred and forty thousand dollars. Will some mathematician please compound the interest on the original sum of $1,100 and strike the balance for eighty-one years?

Those in whose interest William Hopkins, had associated himself with the enterprise, arrived the thirteenth of July, hale and hearty. They had been twenty-six days en-route with ox teams and wagons, loaded with articles necessary to a new settlement. They drove their cattle and hogs, with coops of geese and ducks, turkeys and chickens, fastened to their wagons, buckwheat and rye for seed and the seeds of various plants for medicinal purposes. It was impossible for anyone to do a day's work without a glass of may-weed bitters, or take the pink out of a newcomer of the family without the aid of cat-nip tea. They pitched their tents, and erected their dwelling on a gravelly knoll over and against East Palmyra. They believed what is written in Genesis, 8:22; "While the earth remaineth seedtime and harvest and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease", and they sowed some of their seeds, which have spread and bid fair to remain as long as the earth remaineth.

The land being divided, work began in earnest. They had never read those lines "Woodman spare that three". To those uninitiated in wood craft, the felling of trees may appear a matter of but little consequence in clearing land. A good ax man is as scientific as an engineer. He measures the distances, crooks and winding of the tree, and then lines it so as to fell it on a stump, or across another tree, and splitting, crushing or breaking it in pieces to save chopping. The trees, where the land was level, were windrowed to save carrying the brush, and press them down with the force of the falling tree. The logs would lay the same easy and could be rolled up with less drawing and labor. These rows of brush were fired so the wind would carry the flame on, until the whole mass became a sheet of flame. A good ax man would chop, ready for logging, his acre in five days and receive twenty shillings — or three dollars — for the same.

Such was the routine of labor, day after day, with their early pioneers. In September provisions became scarce with the new settlers, the stump mills failed for lack of corn, Humphrey Sherman was applied to; he lent them five bushels of his first crop of wheat, and a yoke of oxen to go to Jersulem to mill. When asked to lend the wheat his reply was: "I will divide my last quart with you before you shall starve; we will

all starve together", such was the generosity of the early settlers. Hospitality was open, honest, and free from conventional rules; every log house presented an open door, every smoke that curled from the rude chimneys among the trees, invited the weary traveler to rest and partake of the plain but substantial repast. The summer had passed, patches of wheat and rye had been sown, there had been but very little sickness. Mrs. Hopkins' dried medical herbs from Jersey were more than a match for the fever and ague. The cutaneous diseases that a new country is subject to were subdued by a different process.

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March 22 or March 29 - no column

April 5, 1872

OLD NEWSPAPERS No. 19

The winter of '92 and '93 opened mild and continued so. The cattle lived on coarse creek grass or browse. The scarcity of provisions and the slow toil some way of obtaining them, induced some of the Long Island Company, to return and winter on the Island. The six families that stayed found it a winter in the wilderness; with the exceptions of the Durfee an dSherman families, they were isolated from the rest of the world.

The winter was spent in hunting, trapping, chopping and clearing snags, logs and wood-riffs, out of the creek. Deer were killed when wanted for meat, and venison formed a very important article for the table. Reuben Stark heard his hogs squeal; he found a bear laying claim to one that would weigh about eighty pounds. Stark called to his aid Eliam Reeves and his bod Boss, the dog soon treed the bear; it was on the farm now owned by H.M. Clark, a torch of hickory bark showing the bear about fifty feet high. The first shot cut off one of the bear's forearms, the second brought him down; he was a fine fat two year old, and relished well.chopping was the steady work, clearing the creek of logs was a united effort. John Swift, the Durfees and others would come down the creek, inviting all to join them. It was an enterprise worthy of success; they looking to the creek as a permanent thoroughfare to connect them with tied water. They often had to work in the water for hours, raining and cutting the old logs that had lain in the bottom for ages. They cut the wood-riffs to Lyons and as the creek water was a little malarial, they carried a dundlot holding six quarts and containing the extract of a bushel of rye to render the

water healthy. It was a genuine article, not a dead shot with four fifths to the quart, now the kind that yields twenty-one quarts to the bushel at long or short range.

The spring freshets removed the logs; opening the channel free for boats to pass. The farms were bounded on the north and south banks by the creek. Swift claimed the creek through Palmyra as his individual property. It was used, and in 1796, was declared a navigable stream for all boats a=that could float in its waters.

After Swift's death, Joel McCollum,, holding a judgment agains the estate of Swift, levied on the creek. His object was to compel those who had erected mills to pay a certain sum or remove their dams. The mills having been erected by special grants of the legislature, and deeds from John Swift, McCollum failed of becoming the owner of that valuable piece of personal property. For seventeen years, Swift's landing near the Palmyra depot was the head of navigation. Paul Reeves erected a mill in Arcadia, and built a plank lock, but the freshet washed it away. In 1807, he circulated a petition which was generally signed and presented to the legislature, making the center line of township 12, first and second range, the head of navigation. Reuben Stark went to Jersey in February, returning in March, with oxen, cows, sheep and hogs for the settlers. He boxed and brought with him two beehives. No Jersey man could be persuaded that buckwheat cakes were good without honey. Maple sugar that could be used as a substitute on cakes was manufactured in limited quantities, for lack of large kettles to evaporate the sap of the maple trees. The 17th of March 1793 as they were wont to tell the story, Samuel Foster, and Elias Reeves stepped into the boat, swung around and started for Schenectady. It was high water and smooth sailing, taking turns at the helm, they made it a night as well as a day boat, until they met opposing currents. As Fort Stanwix the inland navigation had been improved by a canal connecting the headwaters of the Mohawk with Wood Creek. They paid the toll and lockage which was three hard dollars, and were soon floating down the Mohawk. It was a quick passage being accomplished in seven days. The man with the cocked hat that condemned their boat on its way up, remarked that the boat had passed Wood Creek to the Genesee and returned, he believed the same men would take Noah's Ark down Wood, and up Mud Creek. Foster, who dearly loved a joke, took the old gentleman one side and informed him that Noah's ark was built up Mud Creek, and many of his descendants resided there; that that was the only place in the world where Gopher wood was to be found, and that he would sen d him a load to build boats of, when he got his sawmill in operation. The old Dutchman thanked him; asking the privilege of taking a model of their boat. He considered it superior in style to any that ever dipped its keel in the Mohawk or its tributaries. A sloop from New York arrived at Albany, there were four families on board bound for the Long Island purchase, Joel Foster, Nathan Reeves, Howell Post and James Reeves.* In company with them,, were several young men who were desirous of chipping out a fortune in the wilderness.

***father of the author, who was born in Palmyra township in 1811.**

Purchasing two boats, they proceeded up the Mohawk, by the same route, passing through the streams, until their boats were drawn up by the saw mill brook, where the first boat load had landed. Dwight Foster, a grandson of Joel Foster is the present owner of the soil. As the heads of those families pursued their way to the rude dwellings, a sense of loneliness might have passed over their minds; the homes of their childhood with friends and relatives were left behind, the ocean out of which the sun appeared to rise and set with its white spray, was far away to the east; this land in which the savage roamed was to be their future home; only the sound of the axe and the falling tree broke the solitude. Of the children who came in those boats but two survive; they have lived in an eventful age; to see the slow, toil-some mode of traveling changed to lightning speed, and the transit news flash beneath the ocean's waves. They talk of the early times when they attended school in part of D.H. Foster's house with thirteen others; his daughter Abigail was teacher. She married Benjamin Davis; she died at Sodus Februrary 12, 1872, age 93.

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April 12, 1872

THE OLD AND THE NEW

Just north of this village, across the creek is the farm now belonging to Henry H. Herbert, it being a portion of the purchase of Isaac Arnold from John Swift in 1792. Here Arnold began a clearing and erected in '98, a framed house, one of the first in this vicinity. As the settlement progressed a road was laid out leading east along the north of the creek, crossing it on a bridge just above the present site of Barnhart's mill. During the year 1810, Abner F. Lakey from Buckland, Massachusetts, and purchased this farm, and the following year, when the whole family came, they prepared to build a larger house which was completed the year after. These two houses stood on the north side, and near the road running east and west, a road which was thrown up about 1835, and the oldest house was not used as a dwelling after that date. The newer house was painted yellow and for half a century, was one of the prominent homesteads of the vicinity. Here a large family was reared, most of whom are yet living; but the old house that gave them shelter in childhood has now passed with its builder away, and very few of those who laughed in joy or wept in sorrow away back yonder in the early day of that old house, are today living witnesses of its depletion. The chain of friendship that then stretched from door to door of the faithful few, has been often broken, and its brightest links have crumbled in the dust. A few days since we stood upon the foundation wall of the old house. There was a great pile of bricks with the ruins of three fireplaces that gave light and cheer to three rooms. There was the old brick oven laid up in clay mortar from which often came

the loaves of cornbread, and the few delicacies with which the tables were, won't be crowned on special occasions. There too was the old cellar that used to contain the barrels of cider and the blue of apples, and even the old door stone was there with its corner broken out, the work of mischievous Frank. But the old house having served its day and generation, is now cast aside and nearer to the present highway, on a most commanding site, stands the new one of whom the builder, nor Mr. Herbert, need be ashamed. It stands with gable to the road, and on the south side is a full length piazza, with a fine view of the village and valley between. The beauty of the structure is lost to the south side and one should view it from the road. Mr. Herbert's idea of a proper angle for a roof we believe is right, as too many buildings, that otherwise look well, are spoiled by a quarter or less pitch, making these appear flat and ill-shaped. The inside work is in accordance with the outside and all in good taste. The stair and rail exhibit fine mechanical construction, and taken all in all Mr. Herbert has a pleasant home, a happy family, and no doubt is happy too. We would add here, that the cost of this house was trifle over $3000. Mr. D.B. Harmon was the master builder and the stair and rail were the work of his own hand.

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April 19, 1872

OLD NEWSPAPERS No. 20

In May a boat came up the creek with two families from the town of Conquest, Massachusetts. They started early in the spring; owing to sickness, their journey had been a long and hard one. Stephen Cook from Rhode Island landed on the Durfee Flat in East Palmyra. Cook had the reliable four thousand in hard cash. William Hopkins and wife left New Jersey in a rain storm; on the road his wagon was upset crossing a swollen creek; still the veteran pioneer toiled on, worn and debilitated. He rested his weary limbs at the house of John Hopkins on the 9th of July; he and his wife both died on the seventeenth of that month. A plain, marble slab marks their resting place, west of the stone school house in district 7. His age was sixty-seven and his wife's fifty-eight. The small patches of rye and wheat were gathered up and threshed, showing a surplus. Corn was promising while potatoes, turnips, cabbage and squashes had tested the richness of the soil.

The settlement took rank with those scattered along the creek, and formed a nucleus for the surplus population of old Long Island. The first wedding took place October 27, 1793. Elias Reeves walked to Canandiagua and secured the attendance of the Rev. Ira Condit to officiate. His acquaintance with the people opened the way for the

organizing of a church in the same year with eleven members. It was a "handful of corn in the earth upon top of the mountain".

This organization of a church was among the first in the Genesee country. Geneva, Canandaigua and Phelps were older settled places; but the element that made up the population of those places was of a speculative nature. They were men of talent and culture, but they desired to be first in business; town plots, village lots and shingled palaces, were the golden scheme; the motive power that turned the wheels of their enterprise. Those that settled in Palmyra were sensible of the advantages of wealth, as a means of doing good, they had clear views in reference to their social relations, and looked to the church as a moral power that would mold the character and lay the foundation of a new settlement, in accordance with the golden rule.

The Indians would make their appearance along the creek in groups of ten or more, trap and hunt through the spring months, and trade a little with the settlers. Their connection with civilization had sharpened their wits, their keenness for a bargain was often a course of merriment to the whites; pound for pound, even exchange in all kinds of commodities from a basket to a beaver pelt, or venison, or a pound of flour or tobacco, or gunpowder.

The majority of those that visited the settlement had accepted the Catholic faith. They were honest and respected the Sabbath. They rested on that day, the chief or the prophet held forth invoking a blessing from Deity and exhorted them to provide for their families and maintain the principles of the Christian faith as they had received it. Many of the settlers would attend the gatherings and listen to their extemporaneous remarks.

More than a century had passed since the missionaries commenced their labors among the Indians, before a permanent settlement was established by the whites. Two generations of children had been baptized and passed away since Lamberville and Belmont broke the native soil in the Genesee country and scattered the seeds of the Christian faith. In spite of the quiet manners and habits of the savages before Wayne's victory over the Western tribes, became alarmed and made up their minds that they would have to leave the country or suffer the horrors of an Indian surprise with uplifted tomahawk; but the firmness of the majority, and the fresh arrival in the spring of '94, calmed their fears as numerical strength was added to the settlement.

Isaac, Jonah and Gilbert Howell arrived by the northern inland route. They had irons and stone for saw and grist mill, which was in operation the first of September, on a small stream a half a mile east of the village of Palmyra

Moses and George Culver landed on the flats near C.P. Clark's house an drolled up their log houses. Luther Sanford, who had worked in Geneva three years at carpenter work, and who in passing from Geneva to his land had met Jennie Robinson, daughter of J.D. Robinson, of Phelps, and after the most approved style of diplomacy, in such

matters in those times, had promised to build and share with her a house, which he did build that summer. He built the first framed barn in the town. He was an enterprising farmer and lived to enjoy the fruit of that farm for more than half a century.

The different trades were well represented in that colony. Joel Foster was a carpenter, David Foster a shoemaker, Oliver Clark a tailor, Paul Reeves a millwright, Joseph Burnett a hatter, Elias Reeves a weaver, Seth Howell a rough hewer. Other branches of less note were pursued as pastime, so there should be no idle hours. The Pastor, if not a resident, often tarried for weeks enjoying the generous hospitality of the occupants of those neat log houses.

The doctor followed the path around the hills to where the ague was shaking some home-sick soul. Fourteen years passed before there was a lawsuit in the settlement, that was said to be owing to the fact that in all the companies that were formed, there was not a solitary pettifogger among them — honesty, industry and those limbs of the law could not thrive together.

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April 26, 1872

OLD NEWSPAPERS No. 21

It was in '94 that Charles Williamson made his appearance in the settlements along the creek. He had been an officer in the British army during a part of the revolution, and had been quartered the winter of 1778 at Southhampton. He was acquainted with the Long Island settlers, and came partly on a visit; a present of a beautiful crucible was shown for years after when his name was mentioned. He invited the settlers to assist him in opening a road to the Great Assorodus Bay. Durfee and Sherman, with their men, and very good axman on the northside of the creek lent a helping hand.

It was in September that Williamson with his surveyor was joined by those he had invited and commenced the labor of opening the road.

In the afternoon of the second day a part of the company went to the lake, and stood upon its shore. As they looked out over the smooth, clear waters, it did not appear right; its swells were magnificent: they were not uniform. Tasting of its waters, it was not seasoned, it was not briny; the beams of the sun did not sparkle in it as it did in the ocean; bivalves were not to be found; the shells along the shore were not those of the

sea. Its buoyancy was not sufficient to float a full loaded barrel; its breezes were not invigorating, or braced as the ocean breezes,, with their salty flavor.

They pronounced it an inland sea of no swelling importance. They returned to the ridge, and in company with Williamson, arrived at the point the next day, and beheld his beautiful Bay of Naples, (as he called Sodus Bay).

If ever a company of men were sharp and witty at the expense of another, they were at Williamson's. Each one had a name and it was compared with the dead sea; the stagnant pools of the dismal swamp, an advised him to read Pilgrim's Progress to every applicant for a city lot in his embryo city.

Williamson was a gentleman with easy social qualifications; he enjoyed their wit and tapped a keg of his best foreign brand. He gave them a supper of venison and salmon, provided lodgings under his tent. They returned in the morning to their homes. A few years after he presented them with the map of his city with its spacious streets and fine park of chestnut trees in the center. They pronounced his city a humbug from that time and for a long time to come, they did not live to see his city the terminus of a great railroad humbug by a set of men whose visionary notions soar wilder than Williamson's schemes and fancy attained.

In a new settlement privations often become a source of discontent, but happily those who had erected domiciles along the Ganargua knew that the rich and fertile lands they had settled on and were cultivating, would compensate their labor with an advance of fifty per cent, above the barren sands or rocky plains they had left. With a will they applied the ax, to the opening the forest, adding field to field as if by magic, over which the ripening grain waved with luxurious growth and was beautiful to look at, and rich to contemplate. The art of manufacturing had to be attended to; wool and flax had to be fabricated for present use; the buzzing of the wheels, as they turned out the year and the swift motion of the loom as it beat it into cloth was to be heard from morn till evening. Long pieces of linen cloth was spread on the grass and bleached to a snowy whiteness. Flannel dyed with the bark of forest trees, quilted two thicknesses made a warm and convenient loose sack coat.

The industrious wives of those times, with their sprightly daughters, did not feel it beneath them to card, spin and make garments that were worn by their families; it was an accomplishment that added wealth and comfort to rural life. The sap of the maple tree was made into syrup or sugar; wintergreen, sassafras and hemlock was Young Hyson, Imperial and Black teas to them. There was no lack of substantials. Plenty crowned the tables; a great variety of vegetables were raised, cattle and hogs fattened and slaughtered; the upper and neither gyration of the mill stone pulverized the wheat and sent it through the bold superfine. Those log houses were models of comfort and convenience; a backlog, two feet or more through, with a quarter of a cord of wood, on

large andirons, would blaze and snap, diffusing a genial summer through the house in spite of winter.

The chamber floors were laid with unseasoned boards, which contracted, saving the trouble of registers, for those sleeping in the champers might hear the roaring of the fire beneath and feel the warm air contending with the frost of winter. The doors and side of the houses answered for a ledger, on which was chalked up the accounts of the year/

John Miller credit for one day hoeing corn 37 ½ cts; for crackling flax one day, 50 cts., Dr. to 10 pounds of pork, 40 cts.; one bushel of potatoes 12 cts., 1 of corn, 25 cts.; one of wheat 45 cts.

In 1795 Zenus Foster, Gilbert Howell, WIlliam Clark and Cooper Culver jointly purchased a boat to convey produce to Schenectady and bring back merchandise. The Long Island boat was sold to an agent of Jared Coffin and Benjamin Barton to be taken to Geneva; it was used and known on the Seneca Lake as the fast sailer until it was worn out.

Twenty-three years since, in 1849, when the rappers raked the creek to find the Hydesville ghost, they raked up a portion of an old boat that had countless lain there since the surrounding country was a wilderness.

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May 3, 1872

OLD NEWSPAPERS - No. 22

In searching for a correct history of the early settlers, we meet with a great variety of character; the fruit of varied circumstances. Many a silent worker, who aided in clearing away the wilderness of Western New York, from the very fact of their quiet lives, have been overlooked and must remain unhonored and unsung because no striking peculiarities marked their lives. They left no food for ridicule, no occasion for traditionary stories to be handed down to future generations; but like the silent flight of uneventful years, they came and went, and today there are no headstones of these we can give no history; only the general changes in nature can attest their life's work.

Among the first settlers who came to this valley, was Nathan Harris and his wife Rhoda, whose maiden name was Lapham, a sister of the grandfather of Norman Lapham. He came from Rhode Island in 1793, and on the 3rd of February, 1794, bought six

hundred acres of land of John Swift for $300, New York currency. WIlliam Jackway and Theodasus Sawyer were witnesses to the contract. This purchase was bounded on the west by the town line of the creek lots, on the east by the purchase of William Slocum, on the north by the purchase of Gideon Durfee, Sen., and now contains the farms of Alonzo Langdon, John S. Wright, Thomas Chapman, George Smith, Jacob Stupplebeen, Norman Lapham and other smaller places along the north road, also nearly a mile of the New York Central R.R.

Nathan Harris was not what might be called, an energetic, hard working settler; but quite the contrary. He loved dearly to hunt and fish, to attend "raisings", and could play ball even in his old age, with all the enthusiasm of youth. He knew where all the deep places in the streams were to be found, the summer resorts of the speckled autocrats: their watering places, their Saratogas. He also possessed a sort of marvelous knowledge regarding the exact time when they would bite the best. His neighbors never went fishing when he stayed home; they knew from experience that when Uncle Nathan went then was the time, and he went so often there was no need of going between times. He was as much of a hunter as a fisher and was known as the NImrod of this settlement.

When quits an old man he shot the last wolf killed in this vicinity. This wolf made its appearance in the neighborhood and committed some depredations. A company including Nathan Harris Stephen Phelps and others set out to capture him, and as Harris was riding along the road on his old horse, he discovered that wolf crossing the road, and putting the old horse into a gallop got so near that he shot and killed the wolf while his horse was under full headway.

In the spring of the year when wild ducks were plenty he used to post himself on a bend of the creek on what is now the Herbert farm, and bring them down with his long fowling piece as they were flying over. In wet weather he had a cover for the lock of his gun, made from the skin of a deer's shank, so dried and fitted as to form complete cover for the old flintlock, and when ducks or pigeons came in sight he would throw back the top part which was hinged to the under part, and drawing a quick sight scarcely ever failed of bringing some of them down. The settlers would often find bullets in trees while chopping and knew them to be his, from the great weight of the ball used in his rifle.

It was said that some of the roads, which were quite crooked in his neighborhood, were first laid out as his hunting paths. There were no game laws in his days, and no season of the year but furnished him with his favorite diversions of hunting or fishing in the latter amusement he was much of an adept as in the former and as a trout fisher he had no equal.

He built his log house at the north end of Wintergreen hill, then barren of timber, on the same site where is now the residence of John S. Wright, cleared a small spot of ground, planted some fruit trees and as the settlement progressed, became more and more a sportsman, leaving his farming matters to his wife and boys.

Beyond the house on the west side of the road, was a spring of clear cold water in which he kept trout, and of one he made a pet, teaching him all that was necessary for a trout to know. This trout not only served as a monitor to tell when the time was propitious for fishing but gained for him a sobriquet, a nickname that followed him through life. In time, it got to be a very large trout and well educated so that it would jump at times from the water and seize grasshoppers or other bait which would be held out from time to time. The following story regarding this trout has been often told us by those who knew Harris and while we do not vouch for its authenticity, we nevertheless believe it, as it comes from an unquestionable source.

One day Harris had an old friend call to see him and one who loved the ardent, as was often the case in those days — which caused him to have a red nose, and as his nose was unusually large, he had a large red nose. After taking his usual amount of liquor, which was always to be found on the table, the two friends went out to visit the farm and finally came around to the spring. It was a warm day in early summer and the old friend seeing so good an opportunity for a drink, got down on all fours to partake of the cooling effects of nature's beverage. Nathan looked on, and as the big red nose came near the water, out sprang the trout and seized the end of it which caused a sudden and furious jerk of the head, landing the trout some ten feet in the rear of the impractical water drinker. So frightened was the friend and so carried away with laughter was Harris by the impractical water drinker. So frightened was the friend and so carried away with laughter was Harris by this joke of the trout, that, for a time neither knew what they were about. This, however, did not last long and Harris, after returning the trout to the spring, assured his friend that it was a most propitious time to go a fishing and that he would treat him to some more sport; which he did, as they bagged a fine lot of the speckled beauties in the afternoon. If that trout had kept in the bottom of the spring, there would have been no trout taken from Red Creek that day; the old acquaintance would have missed the best of his visit, and Uncle Nathan would not have borne the name of "Trout Harris" a name by which he was ever afterwards universally known.

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May 10 1872

This famous trout lived to grow and thrive under the liberal hand of Nathan who often spent the pleasant hours of mid-day, catching grasshoppers for his favorite fish, feeding them directly into its mouth with his own hand. Here he used to while away hours together, while Rhoda and the boys were planning where to plant the corn, or prognosticating the map of the weather. He possessed to a remarkable degree, a spirit of rest. He did not allow the onerous duties of the farm to weigh heavy on his mind and his zeal for letting things run, as the saying is, was so great that he let the sills of his barn rot away with the accumulation of barn yard material. If the necessities of the farm

demanded the attention of Nathan, he would exhibit symptoms of a decline, but if a "huskin frolick" or a "logging bee" was on the tapis, his youthful exuberance was unbounded. On such occasions he was the center figure of the group, and whatever in the way of joke that was aimed at "Uncle Nathan", was always received in the best of humor. He was a public man, ready for fun on public occasions but willing that others should accept of public duties as well as public honors.

At the time of Harris' advent to the settlement, there was heavy timber on the hills and in the valleys below his farm and also to the west of it. Wintergreen Hill and the land to the west for some distance was what was termed "openings", or "barrens", and after the clearing was well under way to the north and south of Nathan's there was left a strip of woodland, joining the timber on the east with that of the west. This strip was a little south and west of Nathan's house and through it the wild game used to find covert (sic) in going from one piece of timber to the other. It was called a "runway" and hunters used to train their hounds to drive the game in the direction of it, when they would strive to escape by going through to the east or west woods as the case might be. The custom of Nathan was to mount his old gray mare when he heard the hounds and post himself in the road, which was little better than a path through the woods, and there await the appearance of the deer or whatever the game might be. The old mare knew her business, and as soon as Nathan had discharged his rifle, she would turn and gallop away down the road, and in a short time bring upon the west road, near where is now the residence of Mr. Pratt; Nathan in the meantime loading his gun with mare under full headway. Here he would arrive before the game, and get another shot, often taking two deer, one at each crossing.

Whatever may have been the idiosyncrasy of Nathan Harris he was a man of most excellent good judgment of which his land purchase fully attests. Though he may not have been a thorough practical farmer, he was never-the-less far-sighted and a good judge of land. The purchase which he made in 1794 for $300 is now worth more than $100,000 if we include the railroad, and some of the best farms in this vicinity are included within its boundaries watered by Red Creek and the various springs that flow from the hillsides, and with plenty of good uplands, they are fitted for all practical purposes, whether agriculture or the dairy. But there is another feature of this purchase which must not be overlooked in our sketch, and that is the farm now owned by Thomas H. Chapman: the farm that was sold to raise money wherewith to pay for the printing of the "Book of Mormon" or Mormon Bible as it is called. This farm was deeded by Nathan to his son Martin … who was born in 1786 and came here with his parents when only eight years old. He inherited the longevity as well as the energy and activity of his mother, of whom it is said that she could spin a day's work at the age of eighty-seven, and, as i have never as yet learned of his death, it is safe to mention his longevity, for he was an octogenarian several years ago, and if still living, has hardly attained the age of his mother at her decease … Martin Harris received of his father, Nathan Harris, Oct. 5, 1813, the farm now owned by Thomas H. Chapman, one and one-fourth miles north of this village. This farm contained 121 acres. Stephen Phelps and Ira Selby were

witnesses to the deed. January 14 1814 he received an addition to the same, 25 acres. Stephen Post and Daniel Tadwell witnesses. December 19, 1814, Emon Harris deeded an addition of four acres on the west side of Red Creek, making it in all 150 acres, the present area of the farm.

Nathan lived to be quite an old man, though his age at death we are unable to state. His life was a quiet one, and he was universally honored by his neighbors for his kindness of heart and willingness to assist those in need. In the settlement of this town he was a prominent feature and his remembrance is still cherished by the remaining few who knew him personally.

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May 13, 1897

AN OLD CHURCH

History of the Building of an Old Church in East Palmyra

The accompanying illustration is a reproduction of an old Wayne County landmark, drawn for the Dispatch by Mr. Will Chapman of this village. The following article was written by a resident of East Palmyra who is over eighty-six years of age*,

> **James Reeves was born in 1811, and at the time this article was written in 1897, he would be 86 years old. Mrs. Alice Benjamin, who wrote a history of Palmyra, accredited his as being author of this one. This was logical as he was Palmyra's first historian. Therefore, though his name is not signed to it, it is sage to assume he was the author.**

And who was present at the building of the church and attended services there for over twenty years. Wayne County is deservedly noted for many things and her name will go down on the pages of history:

Believing every page of history of an early pioneer settlement is necessary for a perfect knowledge. I will sketch the history of the church edifice erected in East Palmyra in 1807. The edifice was rude in construction. A new country, although grand, is in a primitive stage. Beautiful dwellings were not to be found in dense forests a century ago. It was the first church edifice erected west of the preemption line in Western New York,

ninety years ago. To know how their fathers and mothers worshiped may be interesting to the descendants of those pioneers who labored to lay the foundation for a useful life.

The question of location was discussed at several meetings in a kind and cordial way. The north side of the Ganargwa had its advocates for a beautiful, pleasant spot in a grove of oaks and hickories, where school house No. 7 now stands. The south side had a beautiful, lovely, central spot in a grove of maples and ashes, where nature lavished her golden charms. An honest course was taken to settle the question. A subscription paper was laid on the table, asking each individual to give his preference for the location opposite his subscription. The south side won — three dollars to one.

It was an argument not to be resisted; it landed the church on the south side. Gideon Durfee Jr., and Humphrey Sherman donated the land — their lines passed through the center of the church. Sherman said the women must be seated on the land he had given; he was not to give ground to be consecrated for rebels and hard shells to sit on.

The timber was lotted off for each one to get: the forest oaks were felled, scored and hewed; the sills were twelve inches square; the posts and beams, ten inches by fourteen; plates, eight by ten inches; rafters, seven inches on the plate — five at the top; studs, four by eight inches; joists, three by twelve inches. The timber was sufficient to build a ship on the line — sin is heavy.

In building they followed the architect of the old Southhamption church that was built in 1707. The majority of the names on the subscription came from Southhampton. The past century had made no change in the style of 1807. The Seagirt Isle had sent her enterprising sons and daughters to open up the forests for a civilized church going people; they were men of nature;s noblest coinage. Truth was a household motto; it was reverenced with the majority of Parsee for the rising sun. fourteen years had passed since the church was organized; they had suffered for room; the congregation was scattered in four towns. A house of small dimensions would not accommodate them. It was to be the sacred place to lay their offerings on, the altar to consecrate their children at the baptismal font. They staked the pond out a forty-five by fifty. It was a territorial church into which every lover of order and good society was to have a standing.

Paul Reeves, an experienced workman, was to have charge of the framing. He set the men to work; they lined and counter hewed, he laid his square on the timber, measured and scratched the mortise and tenons; he told his men there was no cut and try — it would be laid out by the square rule. It was the first time the square rule had been heard of among the log houses. The men said impossible, the timber would rot before raising. The building was framed in the month of June, the weather was warm with bi spring bear by. A spring near where the New York Central depot stands in East Palmyra, afforded the best of water. A jug was filled as often as emptied for the carpenters; they said it was lovely. A hundred and thirty men were necessary to raise the

frame; they responded to a man. The fourth of July was the day set to raise, the timber was put together, every mortise, every tenon was perfect, every joint was square. It was the first frame in Western New York laid out by the square rule. It was raised without accident. Master Paul completed at the raising, his part of the work. Gilbert Howell was placed in charge of the joined work. Two thousand oak roof boars were nailed on, shingled over with hemlock shingles, four thousand clapboards to be planed, two thousand feet of oak flooring to be planed and matched, window frames, doors and eact all made by hand. For seats, round logs, three to a seat, twenty inches long with a slab pinned on top; ther were the seats for a hard working congregation on a warm drowsy day — the necessary changes to prevent aches gave no time for sleep; it quieted the sonorous music, it saved the pastor hard knocks on the front of the pulpit to keep the audience awake. The heating was cheap but sufficient. The sun warmed the house in the summer, and in the winter a box, then by twelve feet, lined with brick and clay, filled with charcoal glowed like a furnace; it filled the house from the floor with a comfortable heat to the rafters; it was an object lesson gto those who had read of a place where the fire was not quenched.

The patriarchs of the congregation in cold weather stood by the box worshiping; leaning on the top of their staffs, the rosy cheeked children stood around the box — no laughing, no throwing kisses — if a young girl had done so she would have to come to the penitential stool on her knees. The church was opened for public service long before it was finished. It was an unfinished space from the floor to the rafters. The lumber was used up, pockets were empty, the society felt what they had done was well done — time would finish. The hail broke the glass, giving the birds ingress and regress; they built their nests on the plates and rafters; they sang their sweetest songs in harmony with the surrounding towns. Has not every limb, branch and twig a gleeful song, is not Indian eloquence forest born?

The first sermon in the church was an hour and a quarter long, the prayer twenty minutes. The pastor spoke of the greatness of their undertaking and the blessings that would crown their labor with success; he closed by saying the half had not been told, the singing a melodious strain of oratory. The words were rendered plain to be understood, the accent was perfect, like the morning stars they sang together while the sons of God joined in the chorus shouting aloud for joy. The church was used in an unfinished state for thirteen years. John White of Southhampton was employed to give the finishing touches. He ceiled the sides, ends and overhead; the old stools were removed seating the house for comfort; the fire box was dispersed with — two stoves gave heat to the congregation; the pulpit rested on a post — in shape it was like a standard fruit dish.

In 1827 the church was sided over, to grow brown it was never painted. Thirty-three years from the time it was built it was taken down to make place for a new church edifice. It had stood as long as Solomon's temple when it was plundered by Shirhack, King of Egypt. One thousand three hundred and seventy-four sermons had been preached in that house by men like Paul who spoke the words of truth and

soberness. The forest inspiration gave them pure thoughts. A correct estimate cannot be made of the good results of that tabernacle in the wildness.

> **It was a region of solitary log cabins, stinted improvements, dark forests, and dreaded fever and chills. It is a land of beauty, enterprise, and prosperity. Nowhere in all this field of progress has the hand of improvement effected a more rapid change or found a soil making better returns for its labor**
>
> **History of Wayne County**
> **1789 - 1877**
> **Prof. W.H. McIntosh**

APPENDIX
Other Newspaper Accounts

A Pleasant Golden Wedding

Fifty years of married life is a long mark on the dial of time. The anniversary of Mr. and Mrs. James Reeves was celebrated September 24th, by them in East Palmyra. The day was equal to the occasion. Mr. and Mrs. Reeves descended from the pioneer settlers of this town, who contracted with Oliver Phelps, of Canandaigua, for five thousand five hundred acres of land, September 9, 1791, and moved into town in May 1792. The families and their connections at this time can be numbered up to more than eight hundred, and are scattered from the Atlantic to the Pacific. It was impossible for them on that occasion to gather around but a small portion of the relatives. Seventy-six partook of the refreshments, that were choice and furnished in variety to suit the appetites of all present. The wind sparkled in the clusters, rich in flavor, harmless in effect. Eight were present that were present 50 years ago. The relatives were there to have a good social time, and a good social time they had. Letters of congratulation were received from numerous friends that could not attend. The hours passed happily, the moon sent forth its light to guide them in safety to their homes.

A PLEASANT AFFAIR

Mr. and Mrs. James Reeves of East Palmyra, observed at their home yesterday, the sixtieth anniversary of their marriage. Friends to the number of sixty or more were invited in to enjoy the hospitality and help celebrate the happy event.

The rooms were beautifully decorated, ferns, vases of flowers, bittersweet and woodbine being entwined over the doors and windows. The cabinet with its rare pair of natural sea shells and curious mountain fossils attracted many an eye. There was much

to admire in the decorations. The tables presented a beautiful appearance with the rich clustered grapes, the snow white biscuit, the quieting delicious tea an coffee and pyramids of the best compounded, best flavored cakes that ever graced an anniversary feast followed by generous dishes of ice cream.

The company varied in age from eight months to 97 years and while the younger chatted and frolicked, the great-great-grandmother was the center of a large and interested group who eagerly listened as she related from memory historical events that occurred during her youth. Near the close of the evening brief literary exercises took place, closing with remarks and prayer from Rev. Mr. COrnwell, a former pastor and greatly esteemed friend.

Occasions like this are rare and it falls to the lot of but few to enjoy such a period of wedded life. It was in 1835 (a half mile north of the present home) at the Sanford homestead that James Reeves and Caroline Sanford became man and wife. After moving once or twice, "they went forth with a loaf of bread and a jug of water on their shoulders laid" and a log cabin in the wilderness became their home. The road back to their friends was something like an Indian trail, while an ox cart and oxen were tangible proof that the young folks were up with the times when they appeared on the public way. To recall the days when the husband was a boy, youngest of eight children, born in the first house north of District No. 8 school house: heavily loaded wagons from the south drawn by four horses, passed by him home taking produce to the lake and return. This road was the main thoroughfare of all the region about in those days. A soldier of the war of 1872 may have stopped at the house, "talked the night away, shouldered his crutch and showed how battles were won." At this time children, men and women, too were none the worse. Children ate their meals standing, the elders only seated.

A hardy, happy, enterprising people, strong and willing to endure privations that a large life might come to their children. Within the space of a life-time orchards have grown up, fruited and died. Roads of travel have ceased to be, and where the early schoolhouse stood and children played, now the wheat and corn grow.

The youngest of the family, he was early sent to school, dressed in a "slip," the record says. Difficulties other than books vexed the young student, for while on his way to school he was met by a bear, and unlike the Levite of old the youthful scholar did not pass by on the other side, but instead made to climb a tree. Plain and frugal living, generous to divide with all in want, such were the times and people in the early part of the 19th century. From the log cabin, the pathway leads to this anniversary day. The rewards of a temperate and industrious life are theirs.

Mr. Reeves is a farmer from choice and Democrat in politics. Books, papers and magazines have been his close companions these many years bringing him within the touch of the master thoughts of those who have helped to shape the mighty progress of the world's history in the last half century. Afflictions have come to them as they come to all, sometime. Their children died in early infancy. Another, an adopted daughter, was taken by them and seldom have parents received from their own such love and ministering care as was given by this one, until she too was taken.

For the days to come, as in the days gone by, we wish for our friends increasing joy as they continue to walk within the green pastures and beside still waters.

THANKSGIVING DAY - NOVEMBER 30, 1871

It is with no ordinary pleasure and delight, we meet so many of you at the old homestead. A day some of us never expected to see in this world. But here we are through the kind Providence of God that has watched over us for good not only during the past year but through all our years that on this Thanksgiving Day we may together express our gratitude to God for his kindness to us as a family. A few remarks from one who according to chronology is the oldest person living now that was born in the Town of Palmyra, would not be uninteresting to some to know what transpired in the days of our youth. From the present standpoint, we look back to the time when these hills and this beautiful valley was nearly covered with a dense forest, when the oak and elm, the whitewood and basswood, the maple and the beach towered heavenward; when the log cabins stood dotted along this muddy stream just above high water mark and at times it is said the mistress of the house stood with her broom to drive the watery element from her door. When marching into one of these log cabins we first drew the vital air and spent the days of childhood and youth on the hills. Both now in sight. School houses were few and far between (*) and many of them built of logs, the light coming to us down the chimney and between the chinks. Meeting houses were still more scarce. The first built in 1807 where I well recollect in my 13th year of placing some stones under one corner which I transferred in 1842 to the foundation of the one then built, which in 1869 i removed to the bottom of the steeple which now occupies the ground where the first stood. There was then no East or West Palmyra, nor Macedon either but a strip of land twelve miles long and six miles wide thy called Palmyra with the Long Island purchase in the northeast corner of it and Mud Creek the southern boundary. But these monarchs of the forest are nearly all gone. The Pioneers that laid them low are fallen and of the second generation but few remain. The third are on the stage and the fourth and fifth are rising up. Instead of forests where we hunted the cows guided by the tinkling of the bell, we behold the cultivated field, the wide spread orchard, in its season, laden with fruit of autumn. We also see the canal, the railroad and the telegraph passing through our bounds to carry off the surplus products of the soil and bring the news from distant climes. These are some of the many changes that have taken place since the days of childhood which some of us have seen and in them all we have had something to do. But our work is done or nearly so. The infirmities of years remind us that our days on earth are nearly closed. But these are not all the changes we have seen. Our fathers came from the land of steady habits-Descendants of the Pilgrim fathers. The principles of the Bible were stamped upon their heads if not on all their hearts. They thought it not safe to live without the Sabbath and a sanctuary. The Church and the gospel ministry, knowing well that these were the safeguards of property as well as morals. Hence the sacrifices to attend meetings; to build meeting houses; to support the gospel and train the rising generation up in the way they should go. I well remember when it was a standing rule in my home, but did not return the way they came. They went through an unbroken forest of 115 miles and a canebreak that was infested with Indians that tomahawked the travelers. And they saw a negro lying beside the road that they had scalped and the Company got short of provisions, almost starved. But they got through

and got back to the Island safely, but my blood has been chilled when i have heard of the perils of that journey told.

They passed the winter on the Island and in the spring they started again. But now they enlarged the Company but divided it. Joel Foster took his brother Abram and Luther Sandford to look along the southern counties of New York (western) while Elias Reeves and William Hopkins should take a more northern route.

The Maryland pony is now geared to a one horse cart, tools and all the necessaries put in and the two Fosters and Sandford start for the west. They fetched up at a place called Lindleytown a few miles west of the city of Elmira and near the old Indian painted post, 72 miles south of here in Steuben County. Here they go to work building mills for Col. Lindley. While at work here, Reeves and Hopkins, having examined land owned by Phelps & Gorham in the Genesee Country, in Township No. 12, second range, took a fancy to it as the best they had seen and came and reported to the mill builders what they had found. After due consultation they authorized E. Reeves, Abram Foster and William Hopkins to make a contract with Phelps & Gorham for 5500 acres of land lying in the northeast corner Township No. 12, second range.

These pioneers returned to the place specified, marked a black oak tree put the initials of their names into the bark and planted some appleseeds on the top of the hill farther north and then went to Cananadaigua to the office and got a contract of Phelps & Gorham and then returned to the Island where they all met to make arrangements for the coming Springs. During the winter Joel Foster superintended the building of a boat to carry out the little colony in the spring. A six-oared boat with jury masts was built in Bos Cooper's shop and launched at Heady Creek and loaded with such necessaries as the Colony needed which consisted of six oarsmen and a family of seven persons, viz: Dea. David H. Foster and wife, Samuel and David his sons, Hannah, Mary and Permelia his daughters. Abigail, one of his daughters, did not come in the first boat. The oarsmen were James Reeves Esq., Elias Reeves, Abram Foster, Stephen Post, David H. Foster and Samuel Foster.

When this boat and its load had started off Joel Foster mounted his pony and started for New York to get Phelps to send on a surveyor to run out the land. This done, he went to Lindley town and settled some business that was unsettled the fall before and then by aid of a pocket compass made his way to No. 12. He arrived on the hill opposite the mouth of Mill Brook and saw the smoke of the Colony peering through the trees for they had arrived a few days previous, being 28 days on their passage all in good health and spirits excepting Uncle Deacon as we all called him who had been hurt by a fall. The boat had been turned bottom upwards and converted into a house and was used as such until they built one about 15 rods from the landmark on the point of the hill. They soon cut down the timber on two or three acres and burned the brush and planted corn, potatoes and pumpkins among the logs on the first of June and had a good crop. A house was soon thrown up and covered with elm bark, a new kind of shingles common in new countries. Bill Ewin (g) the surveyor had now arrived and the 5500 acres were soon divided into lots of 500 acres each and they cast lots to see where each one should have their home. No. 8 fell to Joel Foster, the first lot west of the landmark. He built a house

the east side of the brook this side of C.D. Fosters and returned to the Island to bring on his family in the spring.

In the spring of 1793 Joel Foster with his wife and child, a babe of six months old, started again for his western home accompanied by Dea Stephen Reeves, his wife and three daughters; also James Reeves, Esq., who had returned to take out his Father. Nothing of importance occurred on the return back to the new home. This season and the following Joel Foster worked at his trade in Canandaigua and built the courthouse and a large house for Governor Morris, or superintended the buildings. While at work in Canandaigua, he kept two or three men at work on the farm clearing and fencing and they had advanced on forest from the foot of the hill near to where J.O. Clark's house now stands and a story and a half framed house was built some ten rods south of that building as early as 1796 or 1797 which was the first frame building we think that was raised in East Palmyra.

Joel Foster we have good reason to think was chosen Captain of the first Company or organized militia in Palmyra, but he did not long act in that capacity. His health began to fail. He had overdone himself by hard work and brought on a pain in his side which the Doctor could not cure and ultimately carried him to his grave. He had a model woman for a wife. But few do manage the affairs of so large a family as she had with as much skill and economy as she did. The morals of the family were not forgotten. They were the parents of eleven children. All given up to God in the solemn ordinance of baptism. His wife was a member of the Church in Westhampton before she was married and present when the Church was organized in 1793 and was one that adorned the doctrine of the Cross in all things. Captain Joel Foster did not make a public profession of religion until 1816 yet but few, if any, did more to promote the gospel at home and abroad than he did. His house was the minister's home and more than one house did he build and furnish for ministers during the 23 years before the organization of the Church in the Village of Palmyra of which he was chosen as Elder, which office he held until his death. He lived to see all his children gathered in the fold of God, and two that ministered at the altar. In 1829 he died in the 63rd year of his age.

***later, a school house at every corner of N. Creek Road and some on south side.**

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EAST PALMYRA

JAMES REEVES CELEBRATES HIS EIGHTY-NINTH BIRTHDAY ANNIVERSARY
Thirty-Four Guests do Honor to one of East Palmyra's
Oldest and Most Respected Citizens
Rev. Pitcher's Donation - Notes

About forty relatives and friends met as guests at the home of James Reeves, Monday, January 22nd in honor of his 89th birthday. Mr. Reeves was born in 1811 which

was an active and eventful time in the history of our country, but thirty-one years from the close of the Revolutionary was and nineteen years after the Southampton Colony had established itself in this forest country. It was a pioneer age and his school advantages were necessarily limited. His training was largely how to lay the axe to the roots of trees, thus causing the forest giants to fall headlong to the ground and many were the acres converted to the culture of wheat and corn. Farming was his occupation and a help meet was thought to be a necessity, so at the age of 25 he persuaded Carolin Sanford to accept and fill with promptness the offered trust.

The years as they passed away have been bright with the sunshine of life. Providence made the choice and marked the pathway, for happy moments and pleasant hours have filled their hearts with joy and peace. Once only a dim vapor flashed uncertain light on their path, when their dear one was taken and their lips touched the bitter cup. The old and young have enjoyed their companionship. Their genial dispositions have drawn to them many true and sympathetic friends whose tender and loving ministrations have helped much to ease their one great sorrow and fill their lives with hope and cheer.

An invisible hand has given this length of days which unites January 22, 1811 with 1900. Congratulatory remarks the wish of all was well expressed that the lives of these good friends might be spared until their full century is completed. Of the guests present aside from those of the family name were:

Mr. & Mrs. William H. Kent
Mr. & Mrs. James L. Harrison of Palmyra
Mr. & Mrs. James O. Clark
Mr. & Mrs. Joel R. Foster
Mr. & Mrs. Emory F. Packard
Mr. & Mrs. James West
Mr. & Mrs. Charles R. Harrison
Mr. & Mrs. Edwin H. Clark
Mr. & Mrs. J.D. Warren (Rev.)
Mr. & Mrs. James Galloway
Mrs. Sarah Reichard and Mrs. Elizabeth Tibbitts

Providence had marked the hours and sent a day equal to the occasion, with soft and genial air. The sun smiled and spread a great charm over the earth - a gracious approval. The number present to congratulate Mr. & Mrs. Reeves was 34. Their keen intellects sparkled and overflowed with choice words. The menu was such as no other place could provide for they are experts of the culinary art. The parting was with kind wished that their last days might be their best.

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JAMES REEVE'S BIRTHDAY
GUESTS FOUND HIM DEAD

Aged Palmyra Resident Had Planned to Celebrate
In Worthy Style the Completion of His
Ninety-One Years But Passed Peacefully
Away Yesterday Morning

James Reeves, one of the oldest residents of the town of Palmyra, and a son of one of the pioneer settlers of Palmyra, died at his residence in the eastern part of that town yesterday morning. Deceased was born in 1811, and yesterday he had planned to celebrate his ninety-first birthday with a family reunion and dinner. We had sent out a number of invitations to his relatives and friends, had made quite elaborate arrangements for the affair, and had given instructions to his housekeeper to have everything ready for a 12 o'clock dinner.

Yesterday morning Mr. Reeves arose quite early and complained of not feeling quite as well as usual, but he thought nothing serious of the matter. About 8 o'clock he went to a sofa to lie down and was soon asleep. He must have soon relapsed into unconsciousness for about 8:30 o'clock, when his housekeeper went to him for further instructions about the dinner, she was horrified to find him dead. She at once notified some of the neighbors, and a good many of the guests who had been invited to the anniversary dinner were notified of the sad affair; bur others, who lived at too great a distance to be told, arrived at the house about 11 o'clock and of course were greatly shocked to learn of their host's sudden death.

Decease was one of the best known men in the town of Palmyra and his long residence there made him one of the best historians of the town's early events. His father, James Reeves, was chosen a constable at the first town meeting ever held in the town, which event took place in April, 1796. Deceased's wife died in March, 1901, at the advanced age of years, and his sister, Nancy died in 1897 age 98 years.