

FABIUS Historical Society Newsletter

No. 1 February, 2002

Fabius, NY



Pictured above is the Young Warrior Mower designed, patented, and manufactured in the 1860's by Bramer & Pierce in Fabius, NY

Fabius Historical Society
PO Box 36
Apulia Sta., NY 13020

News from the Fabius Historical Society (FHS)

By Bill Casey bill15308@aol.com
315 683-5674

The Fabius Historical Society (FHS) held its annual election at the December 2001 meeting. Election results are as follows:

Bill Casey, President
Dan Driscoll, Vice President
Shari Schlicht, Treasurer
Ruth Bryan, Secretary

At the meeting, a large round of applause was given to Peter Schlicht for his many years of fine service to the FHS. Peter is not losing interest in local history, as he will continue to be the Town of Fabius Historian and serve on the FHS advisory board of directors.

Membership

The membership is the lifeblood of any organization. The year 2002 will include many interesting projects with hopes that many more will choose to become members. You can become a member by completing the application blank included in this newsletter and mail with appropriate dues to Shari Schlicht PO Box 61 Fabius, NY 13063.

Fabius Historical Society Newsletter

A quarterly newsletter has begun with this winter 2002 issue. Everyone is welcome to submit historical articles. An area that I have found interesting is how our families found their way to Fabius.

Fabius WebPage

The Town of Fabius now has it's own Webpage: <http://www.fabiusny.org>. This website is in development stages and hopefully will grow with the submission of ideas, old photos and articles. If anyone is interested in helping with this project, please give me a call. Anyone with a local business who would like to be linked to our site or has a page of your own, is also welcome to call.

Electronic mailing group FabiusNews

An electronic mailing has been created to allow community residents and organizations to post information to town residents. If you have email access either at home, work or the local library, send an email to:

Fabiusnews-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. You do

not have to type anything in the subject or in the body. There is no charge to join this group.

Up Coming Meetings and Projects

FHS meets at the Fabius Firehouse on the first Monday of each month starting in April. Our meeting line-up is as follows:

April 1, 2002

This meeting will be a general business meeting to address the updates to the FHS constitution and bylaws followed by a display of the **Town of Fabius Website** by Bill Casey.

May 6, 2002

Milking Equipment by Reverend Jan and Mike Gleason. The Gleasons have collected milking machines, associated advertising and literature for many years. Never in their wildest dreams had they thought that their collection would become one of the largest and most complete in the USA. Mike has developed a network of connections, which allows them to locate some very unusual items.

June 3, 2002

Postcards J. Roy Dodge will present a program on local postcards, who made them and how to date them. We will have viewing equipment available to project images of any cards or photographs that you may want to bring and share. This event may be held at the new Community Center.

Proposed, but yet unscheduled programs.

Fabius' Brave Soldiers in the Civil War by Courtney Tucker

A Walking Tour of Apulia Station complete with a handout including before and after pictures of area homes and businesses. If you have any old photos of Apulia Station, please let us know so that a scanned image may be preserved for the program. All photos will be returned or processed while you wait. No one will lose their photos!

Industrial Development along the Railroad Tully, Fabius and LaFayette Historical Societies are collectively working on studying the rise and fall of industrial development along the railroad in each of the Towns. Volunteers are needed for this study.

The Mystery of the Young Warrior Mower

The History of the Bramer & Pierce Agricultural Works, Est. 1838 in Fabius, NY

By Bill Casey (note: for ease of reading and space considerations, footnotes have been deleted but can be found in the full text version on the Fabius webpage:

<http://www.fabiusny.org/history/youngwarrior>

Cows have always outnumbered people in Fabius, NY. The main industry of Fabius has always been and still is agriculture. At the time of the emergence of the Bramer & Pierce Agricultural Works (recorded in their advertising as 1838), agricultural production centered around producing mainly enough food and clothing for the family and perhaps a little for bartering with neighbors. This level of farming was considered as subsistence. At that time, it was difficult or impossible to produce and transport any agricultural product to a market place. Making of cheese and butter had not yet evolved to a central manufacture, although dairywomen did make some of these products at their own farm. The manufacturing of butter and cheese in large scale were yet to be developed, though our town eventually had 7 such facilities.

Our first evidence that the Bramers were in Fabius shows in the 1840 Federal Census of the Town of Fabius, where the families of Lewis and David are recorded. The Census Records only list the first and last names of the head of household, and does not give ages or names of family members. In the 1850 Federal Census, which is the first census to list family members, ages and occupations, we find Lewis Bramer (age 47) listed as a machinist. Lewis lists having four children, with son Lewis being of age 9 at this time. Son Lewis, lives on to be involved with Fabius and this is a story for another time. David Bramer (age 57) is listed also as a manufacturer. His family is listed as having 3 children, and this is where we first find a record that Franklin Bramer(1834-1888) exists.

In the Syracuse Standard dated 10-7-1850, David Bramer is awarded a "Diploma" for a Two Horse Power Threshing Machine at the

Onondaga County Fair. We don't know the meaning of Diploma but we'll assume that he most likely had invented this equipment. This is the first confirmation of the type of business that the Bramer family is involved in.

We next find the emergence of a Young Warrior Mower, patterned and manufactured by Frank Bramer & Egbert Pierce. Egbert Piece (born 1841), is listed as a partner with Frank Bramer. The Pierce families appear early in Fabius history. The 1820 Federal Census records 6 Pierce families. 1840 records show 3 families remain. The 1850 census displays Egbert (age 19) occupation: farmer, living with his father Caleb D., also a farmer, but little can be found about his involvement in the Agricultural Works.

At the NYS Agricultural Fair in 1865, as recorded in the Transactions of The New York State Agricultural Society, the Young Warrior Mower is listed as entry No. 240, price \$110. Entry of farm equipment was important at this time to display a machine's superiority which would result in increased sales. The economic conditions were perfect to sell a large number of labor saving agricultural inventions, as labor had become in short supply with most able-bodied laborers being solicited for fighting in the Civil War. Also, local dairymen now had a ready market for all the milk they wanted to produce. European cheese demand had been developed for the American factory-made cheese. Farmer-made cheeses tended to vary in consistency and commanded lower prices. The Agricultural Society noted that Bramer had mastered an entirely new principle of enclosing gears in an iron case and perfecting a machine that required the least amount of draft. But as we will see in many future contests, Mr. Brown of the Buckeye Works of Poughkeepsie, NY was awarded the top honor.

Excerpts from the undated scrapbook of Miss Jane Harris, last known to be in the possession of Mrs. Elmer Fox, include the following typed information:

"Bramer & Pierce's agricultural works, in the east part of the Village of Fabius is a fine new establishment for manufacturing the "Young Warrior" mowing machine, threshing machines, horse powers, clover machines,

separators, sowing machines and general repairing of any and every description. The main building is of wood, two stories above a stone basement, seventy by thirty, with a wing, twenty-four by sixty, two stories only. In the basement is the foundry and forging shops, with three forges for general custom work. In the second story is the general machine shop, with planes, lathes and other tools usually found in such places. In the third story is the wood working machinery and the paint shop. The lower story of the wing is used as a general trimming shop for castings, fuel and boiler room. The upper story is for storage of lumber. The firm employs from fifteen to twenty hands in the various departments and makes about two hundred mowing machines per annum, besides the other agricultural machinery. The works are driven by a twenty-five horse power engine the make of Hinman & Sperry, Syracuse and is a very creditable piece of machinery." No author or date is provided with this information.

The Gazetteer and Business Directory of Onondaga County of 1868-69 advertises this Fabius establishment along with the artwork that is on the cover of this newsletter.

So what happened to this thriving industry?

This is the last evidence of the Agricultural Works in Fabius. It would appear as if this facility just closed its doors. My investigation had been halted for awhile until Village Historian Virginia Cameron pointed me toward Little Falls.

The Gazetteer and Business Directory of Herkimer County 1869-70 carries the following entry: "The Young Warrior Mower- This popular Mower was invented by Frank Bramer about two or three years since, and secured by letters of patent. Its manufacture was commenced and carried on at Fabius, Onondaga County, until 1868. An exhibition of one of these machines in the field at Little Falls in that season, produced an impression so favorable on some enterprising citizens of that place, that a company was organized and incorporated for its manufacture at Little Falls. It commenced business there on the first of December, 1868. The establishment is on the south side of the river, adjoining the towpath of

the Erie Canal. The principal building is of brick and stone, 80 feet by 40, four stories high, with an excellent water power. Another building is now being erected adjoining, one story high, with an area 3000 square feet, to increase capacity. Its castings are procured from the neighboring furnace of Mr. Reddy. The Company commenced moderately, producing only 600 machines the first year, intending to enlarge its capacity and number of the mowers from year to year, as its merits become better known. It employed 40 men last winter, besides the furnace men. Arphaxed Loomis is the President of the Company, and Frank Bramer, the Managing Agent." The Warrior Mower Company closed its operation in 1893, five years after the death of Frank Bramer.

Information from Susan Perkins, Administrative Director of Herkimer County Historical Society, provided the following information. Frank Bramer built a mansard-roofed brick home in Little Falls in 1876. Bramer's daughter Nellie (1864-1906) married County Judge Rollin H. Smith (1838-1911). Following Rollin's death, the Bramer house was deeded to the City of Little Falls for the establishment of a library, along with an endowment for its conversion. In 1982, a new addition was built and dedicated, financed by the George L. Smith trust fund. The old section now houses reading, reference and storage rooms while the addition contains the main library and community rooms.

If one searches the internet for Fabius, an entry will appear for the Fosmer letters. Humphrey Fosmer was a long-time Fabius resident and wrote to his sister Catherine Pierce over a period of 20 years. In a letter dated Jan 5, 1866, Humphrey tells his sister that there was a serious fire in town (Fabius) a few days ago, Frank Bramer's machine shop in which he was building many machines, took fire in the day time and burnt to ashes no insurance, loss quite heavy.

Although Frank left Fabius to pursue a new factory in Little Falls, his love and appreciation for Fabius is evident because his family chose to bury him in the Fabius Evergreen Cemetery.

As Town Historian, I wrote the History of Fabius for the Onondaga County Bicentennial in 1994, formed a bus tour of the town of Fabius in 1998, and wrote the History for the 75th Anniversary of the Fabius Fire Dept. I also receive numerous letters from all over the country looking for "lost relatives". Searching through cemetery records, I have been able to locate many family members and reply to their requests.

Editors note:

In recognition of the Schlicht family ties to the construction of our Civil War Monument and of Peter's dedication through the years to the Fabius Community, he has been nominated as this year's Grand Marshall of the Memorial Day Parade. Contained in the next issue of the Fabius Historical Society Newsletter will be information about Peter's grandfather, the stone mason who constructed the wall surrounding the Civil War Monument.

Virginia H. Cameron

Fabius Village Historian 315 683-9446

The Preservation Society of Central New York presented an award to the Village of Fabius in recognition of the listing of the village on the National List of Historic Places. Mayor Melanie Vilardi accepted the plaque for the village at a ceremony at the Corinthian Club in Syracuse last April. Also in attendance were the Village of Fabius Historian and Kathleen Cameron, former mayor of the village and former president of the Fabius Historical Society under whose term the original research was begun by the Cornell College of Architecture, Art & Planning. Research is also ongoing on houses outside the original district which can be added to the National List. Recognition as a National Historic Place makes non-profit organizations eligible for grants for restoration and upkeep. Fabius Baptist Church has received such a grant in connection with its roof replacement.

The stone surveys of Fabius Cemeteries supplied by this office to the NYGENWEB site

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~nyononda/CEMETERY.HTM>

has generated many requests from far-flung researchers who have early family ties to this area and are seeking information on their ancestors in the period between 1790 - 1850, before the US and NYS census expanded the data available to the public. In return, the researchers donate copies of Bible records, letters, personal reminiscences and itineraries of their forebears when they left Fabius to seek their fortunes elsewhere. These are valuable additions to information already in the historian's files. Collection of this material is an ongoing project of this office to preserve and protect the story of the early settlers and expand our knowledge of the founding and growth of "Fabius Center", as it was known early on. Despite the efforts of former historians to gather and duplicate facts, much has been lost about those crucial years and yet much still surfaces. We welcome anyone willing to share pictures, diaries and family records and guarantee careful handling and prompt return after duplication. Eventually, these records will be the basis for a written history of the village, its founders and the people who chose to settle here.



Next newsletter will highlight the activities of Memorial Day Celebrations May 27, 2002