

President's Message

Hello Everyone!

Once upon a time a man by the name of Ray Benson started the Pioneer Museum. It is still going strong 57 years later thanks to Al LaFrance who got permission from Onondaga County Park to reopen it after Mr. Benson retired and the county closed it. An article about Ray Benson and the Pioneer Museum has been included in this newsletter thanks to Manlius Historian Barbara Rivette. A picture following the article shows Al and Dale Sweetland cutting the ribbon for the grand reopening in 2006. Information for when the museum is open and how to get there is on page 2.

If you have program thoughts for 2017, please let Chuck Kutscher or me know about them. We welcome different ideas related to history. Our attendance has been increasing which makes us feel good. We are glad to see school-age children attending.

It makes me so happy to have such wonderful FHS members who work so diligently on projects to preserve our local history. Thank you.

I hope you have been enjoying the Fabius topics which have been put on "The Cloud". The digital archive is found at:

<http://tinyurl.com/odcv5hw>

(That is what you type in the search box when you Google the topic.)

On Election Day, November 8th, we will be having a bake sale at the Fabius Community Center. Just thought I would mention that to get your taste buds active.

If you are interested in becoming an executive board member, please let me know. We have board meetings 3 times a year, January, April, and October.

Sandy Beglinger

The following programs will be held at the Fabius Community Center:

Mon., July 11, 7pm--Dr. Pamela L. Poulin will portray professional flag maker, Mary Pickersgill, who made the 32' x 40' flag that inspired Francis Scott Key to pen our National Anthem.

Mon., Aug. 1, 7pm-- Roger Cook (from New Woodstock) will talk about the Belmont Works which was located in Cazenovia. This explosive factory was the 2nd largest in the nation from 1888-1898.

Mon., Sept. 12, 7pm-- Grey Osterud will talk about women and family farming in the early 20th century NY.

Mon., Oct. 3, 7pm-- Dick Woodworth will have on display and talk about his presidential memorabilia collections from 1824-2016.

Mon., Nov. 7, 7pm-- The OHA will present "The Diaries of Adam and Eve" which is adapted from the works of Mark Twain.

Mon., Dec. 5, 6pm--Our annual pot-luck supper will be at 6pm. For entertainment, after we eat, we will have Eileen Wells and her musical group. Please bring a dish of food to share and your own table setting.

Fabius (-Pompey) Central School Yearbooks

We have quite a collection of yearbooks dating back to 1945. It is not complete. We are missing the following years:

1951	1993	1997
1988	1994	1999
1990	1996	2000
2002-2015		

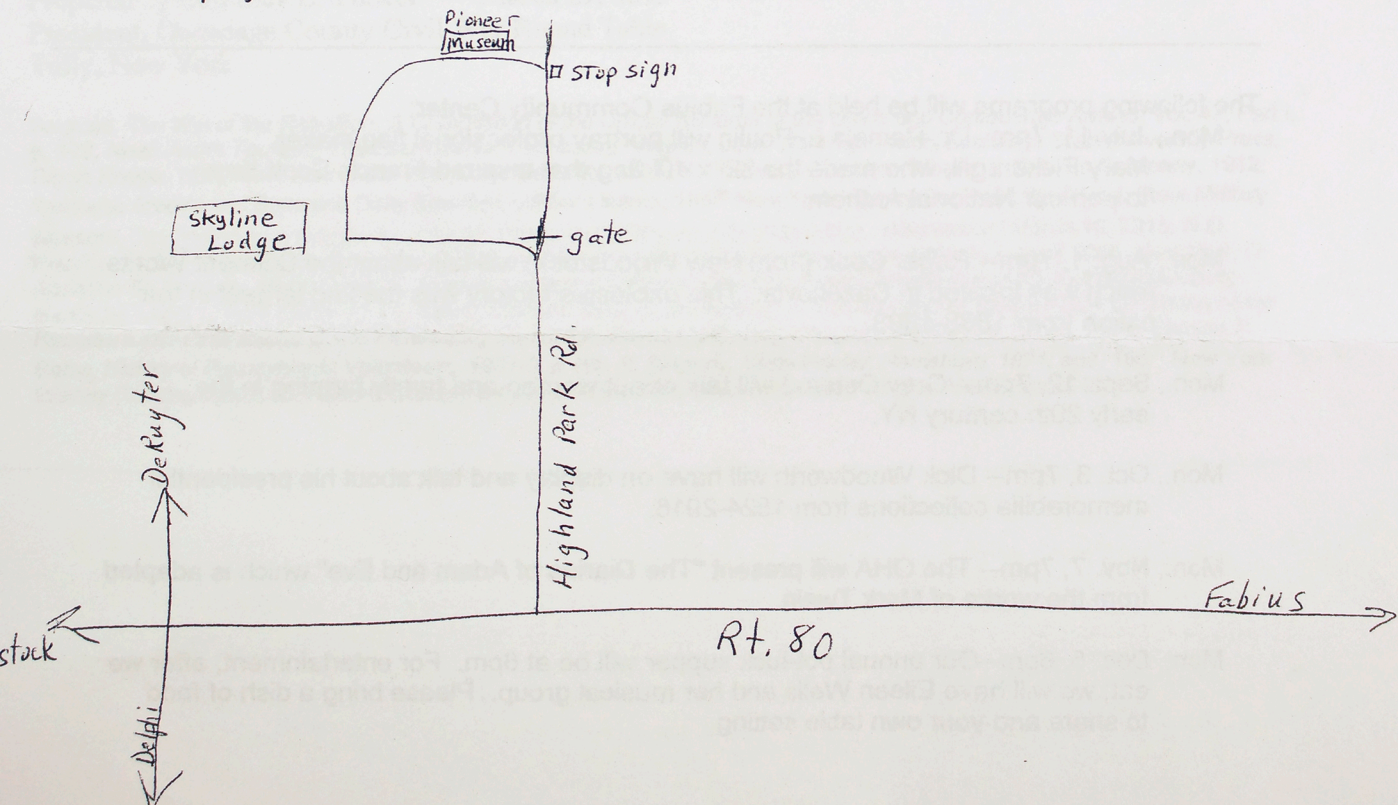
If you have one of these yearbooks that you don't want or need, could you donate it to our collection? Thank you.

Pioneer Museum
Highland Forest
Open: June, July, August
Weekends: 1-4pm

Directions on how to get there:

Take Rt. 80 to Highland Park Road, 2.8 miles east of Fabius. Head south up the winding road for .9 mile. At the top you will see a gate. If the gate is open, drive through to the stop sign. The Pioneer Museum is to the southeast of the stop sign. If the gate is shut but not padlocked, push the gates open, drive through, and close the gates behind you. If the gates are padlocked, turn left and go to the Skyline Lodge office. Tell someone in the office that you want to drive to the museum. They will direct you to a roadway through the woods that ends near the museum.

I hope you will visit this summer.



Pioneers Museum Saves Americana For Future

5 MAY 66
America has a colorful past. Some of this color becomes faded or lost as valuable old papers, pictures, books, tools, household items and objects of art are destroyed in the march of progress. To preserve such historic items is the purpose of the Pioneers Museum at Highland Forest County Park near Fabius, where complete remodeling has just taken place.

Founded in 1959 by Raymond Benson, Onondaga County forester in charge of Highland, the museum has doubled in size by the addition of a new wing completed this spring. As a result, Mr. Benson has been able to spread out the displays from bygone days and to construct a series of roomettes for concentrated displays that belong together.

The entire museum has been painted and shelving added. In the kitchen roomette, utensils from other years identifying labels are displayed with jars and glasses. Next door is the library roomette featuring a desk, from the old Pompey Academy, along with new shelves for old books.

In the library. Mr. Benson is now able to display valuable old documents and papers between sheets of glass so they may be read from both sides. Among them is an original edition of The New England Courant of 1723, printed by Benjamin Franklin.

Other papers preserved in glass covers are facsimiles of Revolutionary War bills, Civil War bills, early summonses and judgments, a newspaper announcing Lincoln's assassination, and early property deeds.

One roomette has been reserved for Civil War memorabilia. The guns collected by the museum are now all together in the room under glass and labeled as to origin and year. Earliest is a



Raymond Benson, founder of the Pioneers Museum at Highland Park, uses a quill pen in the new library roomette of the museum. The desk is from the old Pompey Academy, the spectacles on the book are one of several pairs from a museum collection. Mr. Benson is the county forester in charge of Highland Park and an assistant deputy commissioner of the Division of Parks.

Kentucky flint lock rifle of the 1800's.

Civil War sheet music is also on display along with a documented history of Erie Kenyon's "greetings" from Uncle Sam, his transportation orders, and his receipt for \$300 for paying the fee not to be drafted.

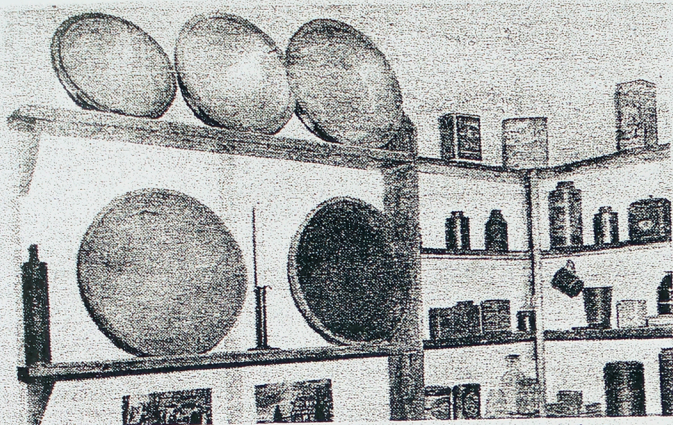
In the dining roomette, Mr. Benson has used the mantle from an old house as the focal point for the room. It illustrates the furniture of the 19th century. A hanging lamp in the room was the first donation to the museum. A Franklin type stove is also featured. Mr. Benson needs a 19th century dining room table to complete the furnishings.

A rare wax flower arrangement framed under glass decorates one wall. It was made by Josephine Swartout in 1850. Mut-

ton tallow candles made in 1840 are on the mantelpiece. An entire box of such candles was donated to the museum by the George Lewis family of Oran.

In the bedroomette, a rope and trundle bed and antique dresser show sleeping arrangements of long ago. Old clothes are stored in the dresser drawers and other items are exhibited on the walls. Mr. Benson said that 19th century women were so tiny that their clothes do not fit even the department store dummies used for the display today.

In the hallway between the open roomettes, a black bear skin with grinning mouth, recently donated by Mrs. Ernest R. Deming, Hoag Lane, Fayetteville has become a favorite of children visiting the museum. Mrs. Deming also donated a large deer skin which decorates a wall.



In the kitchen roomette, utensils, bottles, pans and tin containers are displayed on new shelves with candlesticks and mutton tallow candles made in 1840. Against the newly painted walls of the recent addition, the artifacts of yesterday are artfully displayed for easy study. Many Scout units and school groups have already visited the refurbished museum. To the young, it opens an entirely new world.

Another roomette is for the museum's odds and ends. Here are displayed spinning wheels, an old suction vacuum cleaner which the children of the family pumped while mama swung the cleaning tube around. An 1850 sewing machine is also on display.

In the craft center, Mr. Benson has arranged displays of carpenter and cobbler tools and saddle maker's outfit. A maple syrup center includes pictures of how the utensils were used. A yoke worn by the farmer to bring pails of the syrup down from the sugar row is displayed.

The room features an original pencil drawing of an 1850 sugar-ing-off party, drawn by Julia Ann Cavil of Fabius.

Mr. Benson is pleased with new acquisitions on display in the older part of the museum. Among them is an antique store counter in a "country store corner." Originally from Beaver Falls, it was donated by a Syracuse family which used it as a work bench.

Mr. Benson is always on the look-out for new items. In the house on the former Ernest Ladd property, which the county recently purchased for the Oneida Shores Park, Mr. Benson found a number of stuffed birds which he has added to the lonely loon in his museum. Also on the Ladd

property he found a valuable Lamoka Point arrowhead from an Indian culture of 3,500 years ago, in this area, and two tomahawks. All have been added to the Indian displays under glass.

Mr. Benson said that Dwight Carley of Watervale has promised to donate his extensive collection of Indian relics to the Pioneers Museum.

The Fabius Yorkers Club has a roomette for exhibition of projects, including a prize-winning cutaway of an Iroquois Longhouse.

Expansion of the museum permits the concentration of special sections with lights and labels. One wall is filled with early toys.

In addition to regular family visitors to the museum, delegations of Scouts and school children have already begun to enjoy the American past. The museum is open from 1 to 4 p.m. all year.



Fabius and the Civil War

prepared by Courtney L. Tucker

At 6 a.m., March 29, 1865, soldiers from Onondaga and Cortland counties began their march north on the Quaker Road across Gravelly Run and through the fields of the Lewis farm, west of Petersburg, Virginia. Leading the advance was Brigadier General Joshua Chamberlain's First Brigade, First Division, V Corps, Army of the Potomac, composed of the 185th N.Y. Volunteer Infantry regiment with 721 men and the 198th Pennsylvania volunteer infantry with about 1,100 men. Along the White Oak Road defensive line, Confederate Major General Bushrod R. Johnson's division and supporting artillery mustered between 4,800 and 6,000 men.

To meet the Union threat, Johnson ordered Brigadier General Henry Wise's experienced Virginia brigade of four regiments into a line of battle. Following Wise's brigade were the brigades of Brigadier Generals William Wallace (six South Carolina regiments), Young Moody (five Alabama regiments) and Matthew Ransom (five North Carolina regiments). Wise passed south beyond the intersection of the Boydton Plank and Quaker Roads and when his right flank entered the woods, Union skirmishes began firing.

The bridge across Gravelly Run had been destroyed, but Chamberlain's brigade waded the stream, and overran the rifle pits on the opposite bank. Skirmishers from the 198th Pennsylvania were sent forward while the remainder of the regiment deployed in line of battle on the right side of Quaker Road, as the 185th New York commanded by Colonel Gustavus Sniper, took up their position on the left. The brigade then advanced until it reached the Lewis farm buildings, and halted to await the remaining brigades of Brigadier General Charles Griffin's First Division.

The Lewis farm was in a field stretching 1000 yards from Gravelly Run and flanked on either side by heavy timber, in which were posted Confederate sharpshooters. Wise's brigade was strongly posted in earthworks on the edge of a stand of timber near an old portable saw mill and its long pile of sawdust. The Federal brigade had not gained the woods by the time intense Confederate fire halted the advance. Encouraged by their officers, sergeants and corporals, the men from Onondaga recovered and forced part of Wise's brigade to fall back to the Boydton Plank Road. In response, Wallace's South Carolina brigade was ordered forward and deployed into the woods to the right of Wise. After pushing Wise a mile towards the road junction, Chamberlain halted his brigade to regroup, but Wallace and Wise counterattacked, causing the left of the 185th N.Y. to give ground and bend back. Soon the Rebels turned Chamberlain's left flank, forcing the brigade to fall back to the clearing near the Lewis farm house and reorganize. The next Confederate attack was ferocious and bent the left flank further until the brigade was nearly "L" shaped.

Reinforcements arrived on the left and attacked Wallace and Wise. Battery B, 4th U.S. Light Artillery rode up and unlimbered two guns to the left of the farm house and two guns to the right, then began raking the Rebels with canister. In response, General Johnson ordered Moody's Alabama Brigade forward to charge the guns. With reinforcements and artillery support, Chamberlain's left flank regained the initiative and counterattacked into the woods, but now the center and right began to give as the Alabamians pushed forward. The Federals had nearly exhausted their ammunition and were relying on the bayonet when the 1st and 15th Michigan, the 155th Pennsylvania, and the 188th New York arrived to relieve Chamberlain's brigade, which fell back to protect the artillery.

Confederate Lieutenant General Richard Anderson commanded the White Oak Road-Boydton Plank Road defensive line. When he was informed about the Union reinforcements, he ordered General Johnson and his men to fall back to the road intersection into positions further up the Boydton Plank Road. In the meantime, at 6:00 p.m., two other Union brigades pressed the retreating Rebels to the road junction until dusk. The Battle of Lewis Farm had come to an end.

Total casualties for the 185th N.Y. that day were 1 officer and 31 enlisted men killed, 1 officer and 22 men wounded who died from their wounds, and 8 officers and 140 enlisted men wounded who recovered. No one was missing or captured. The regiment suffered 203 casualties out of 721 men who went into action. Too often we hear of KIA's or casualties, impersonal terms easily forgotten. But these were all real men with their own lives, who lived in Syracuse and Camillus, Tully and Truxton, Otisco and Skaneateles, Homer and Fabius, Cortland and Cicero. These men were your ancestors, perhaps even your relatives, who gave their lives to preserve the Union, and also set other men and women free. They were patriots in the truest sense of the word. Let us honor their memory and their sacrifice, just a little over 150 years later.

Prepared by Courtney L. Tucker March 29, 2015
President, Onondaga County Civil War Round Table
Tully, New York

Sources: *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Vol. 47, Part I, p. 173; Noah Andre Trudeau, *The Last Citadel, Petersburg, Virginia, June 1864-April 1865*, Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, 1991; *New York in the War of the Rebellion*, 3rd ed. Frederick Phisterer. Albany: J. B. Lyon Company, 1912; Syracuse Journal and Syracuse Daily Standard soldier's letters, 185th New York Infantry Regiment, New York State Military Museum, <http://dmna.ny.gov/historic/reghist/civil/infantry/185thInf/185thInfMain.htm>, downloaded March 16, 2015; N.D. Preston, *History of the Tenth Regiment of Cavalry, New York State Volunteers, August 1861, to August 1865*, New York, D. Appleton & Company, 1892; Edwin C. Bearss and Bryce Suderow, *The Five Forks Campaign and the Fall of Petersburg: March 29 - April 1, 1865* (2014-03-12, Kindle Location 855), Kindle Edition; A. Wilson Greene, *Breaking the Backbone of the Rebellion: The Final battles of the Petersburg Campaign*, Savas Publishing Company, Mason City, Iowa, 2000; Samuel P. Bates, *History of Pennsylvania Volunteers, 1861-5*, p.466, B. Singerly, State Printer, Harrisburg, 1871; and, 185th New York Infantry Regimental Books, Record Group 94, Adjutant General's Office, National Archives, Washington, DC