



Deerpark Diary

Town of Deerpark 1863 School House Museum

Town of Deerpark Historian, P.O. Box 621, Huguenot, NY 12746

845-856-2702, www.1863schoolhouse.org

June 2015

Vol. 15

No. 2

Features

- **Early Settler Crafts**
- **Deerpark Civil War Veteran Andersonville Prisoner**
- **Museum Programs for 2015**
- **Joseph Brant Bus Tour**

Early Settler Crafts

As we contemplate our town's 325th year of settlement, it is impossible to think of these early settlers but for the hardships they and their next generations endured. Self-sufficiency was the order of the day. Homespun skills and crafts so important to their livelihood were a common necessity. As populations grew and store goods started to become available, the farmers having little cash, were "paid by the subscriber in goods at the lowest cash price." This spoke to the days when transactions were commonly settled by barter rather than cash.

Aside from the toils of 18th century farming which in-

cluded; clearing land, plowing, planting, harvesting, tending animals, cutting firewood and a myriad of other chores, the farmer could generate a few dollars from now long-time forgotten activities that he performed on the side. As long as there was still an abundant supply of forest resources, he could make charcoal, potash and wood shingles.

Charcoal was seriously important as a source of fuel. The iron industry actually started in Lynn, Massachu-



setts in 1643. Huge amounts of charcoal were needed to smelt pig iron. That is until an

early call for conservation rang out due to deforestation.

Charcoal was indispensable to blacksmiths who were in turn indispensable to early settlers. Our founding settler, William Tietsoort, himself a blacksmith was invited to this area because of his skills. The tinsmith equally depended on



this fuel to heat his soldering irons.

A farmer could eke out a few dollars by turning a section of his wood lot into charcoal. Wood was cut in 4 foot lengths. Elm was always the best, however any kind of wood was utilized. In the center was laid a pile of light dry kindling. The wood was set on

end, leaning toward the center. Piles could run to 20 feet in diameter. Another pile would be placed on top of the first. A charcoal pit could contain 25 – 30 cords of wood. The pile would then be covered thickly with soil and moss. The final structure would resemble an old fashioned bee hive. Openings were left in the top for draught in the beginning. The pit needed constant tending to prevent fire breakouts. Fresh soil was used to patch any outbreaks. Estimates say that for a four foot log cord – 30 bushels of charcoal could be gotten. The farmer was lucky to get 14 cents per bushel. So for all of

Again the commodity depended on a goodly supply of trees. A large pile of logs, branches and brush was gathered and set on fire. As soon as the fire had died down the ashes were gathered and leached. The lye would be boiled down in heavy round kettles. After the evaporation process, the “cake” was left on the bottom. This was called “black salts” because of the dark impurities. This is what the farmer would sell for \$3.00 a hundred weight. If a sudden storm arose before the ashes were collected all the work went for nothing, as too much chemical was leached from the ashes.



draw knife and a cleaving tool called a froe were the tools needed.

By the time of 1850 to the end of the Civil War, many of these homespun skills disappeared. By 1865, the Industrial Age was in full swing aided in huge part by the mass production and shipping of Anthracite coal from Carbondale on the D & H Canal, which passed right through our rural valley.



Buckwheat Pannicakes

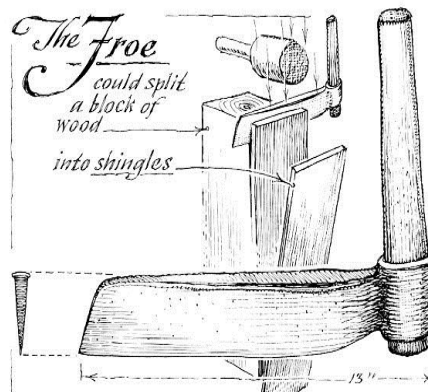
Buckwheat was a grain grown in every county and township in New York State. The grain belongs to a family of grasses believed to have been originally grown in Asia. Buckwheat made its way into Europe and was brought to America by the earliest settlers. Originally it was called beech wheat because the large kernels looked like beech nuts. More buckwheat was grown than rye.

Buckwheat mills easily into a fine white but gritty textured flour. Europeans used the flour for breads but in America it seems it was used



his work, he might earn \$4.20.

Potash was the agent used to clean wool, as well as for soap and dyes. In the earliest days of the settlement, there were more sheep than cattle. Wool was a prime material for making clothing and bedding. Newly shorn fleece needed scouring to cleanse the wool of the yolk, a gummy secretion which made up half the weight of the fleece.



A third skill set held was that of shingle making. In very early times this was the universal roofing material for homes and barns. A scanty income could be made shaving shingles during bad weather.

In the Northeast, white pine was the favored wood. A block of wood, a heavy mallet, a good

mostly for pancakes. The flour was mixed with sour milk or buttermilk. The batter was then mixed with some of the



yeast dough made earlier in the day from bread baking and placed in a large pitcher. In the evening, it was then set in a warm spot like the back of a stove. Hours later a foaming mass had developed and often spilled over the top of the pitcher. Setting it into a pan was necessary. In the morning the batter was stirred and poured out onto a hot griddle.

It was said that too much of a good thing caused an allergic reaction called “buckwheat itch.”



Sparrowbush Man in Andersonville Prison

Members of the Deerpark Museum were preparing display materials for the “Stephen Crane Civil War Era Tri-States Historical Exhibition” to be held Saturday, June 20, 2015. We came across a twenty year old article from “The Gazette.” The article was a reprint of diary entries written by Jacob W. Henion when he was held prisoner in the

most infamous prison camp of the Civil War...Andersonville. Henion served as a private in Company E, 6th N.Y. Cavalry. He was captured June 11, 1864.

We have included some of his entries. These horrors touch us, as we think that one from our own town suffered through ten months of starvation, disease, brutality and death. He survived to come back to the area with his wife, he raised his son and worked as a mason. Henion died Jan. 26, 1905 and was buried in the Pine Knoll Cemetery in Sparrowbush.

June 12, 1864 – No rations. Heavy rain at night. I felt very cold and hungry.

June 17 – Marched from Charlottesville for canal. Walked all day, encamped in woods. No rations or water. Very tired.



June 28 – Arrived at Andersonville stockade. Searched again and put in prison in detachments of 270 men and divided in mess of 90. Drew rations of one pint and a half of meal and no meat or salt.

June 29 – Raiders in camp and one of them cut a hole through my blouse but thank God I escaped the blow.

July 2 – More of the raiders caught and I began to wish they were all dead for there are no rations issued during the search for them.

July 10 – Raiders trial over and sentenced to hang. The news came into camp that they were to hang on the 11th.

July 11 – The sun rose this morning on our camp of misery and made it look quite cheerful except to those about to be executed. The gallows were made of pine in the south end of the camp near the gate on which there was six called to eternity for robbing and killing their comrade soldiers for their money and other little articles of value.

July 18 – Today I took another walk through camp and found only four dead men. It is so crowded that I hardly had room to walk there being over 35,000 in camp.

July 20 – The report is that five men escaped a tunnel last night and there has been much excitement during the day. The rebs has been throwing up breastworks for fear of some raid from the yanks.

July 25 – Sold my ration meat for ten cents and bought three chews of tobacco.

Aug. 6 – I saw a man shot in the stream which is a common occurrence.

Aug. 8 – Today some prisoners left. Said to be exchanged with the sick. About 90 or 100 in number.

Aug. 14 – It is a calm and beautiful morning. The sun rose on our camp of misery and death. It caused me to look on the misery by which I was surrounded and think of friends far away.

Aug. 18 – Today I was out of the stockade it being the first time since I came in. I helped carry a sick man to the hospital. Had a chance to get some wood.

Aug. 28 – My birthday. Morning calm and clear with little wind.

Sept. 27 – Worked all day carrying the dead and the sick. More prisoners went out at night. About 750.

Sept. 28 – All quiet at night. I then flanked out and got on the cars for Macon. Got there at night and left for Savannah.



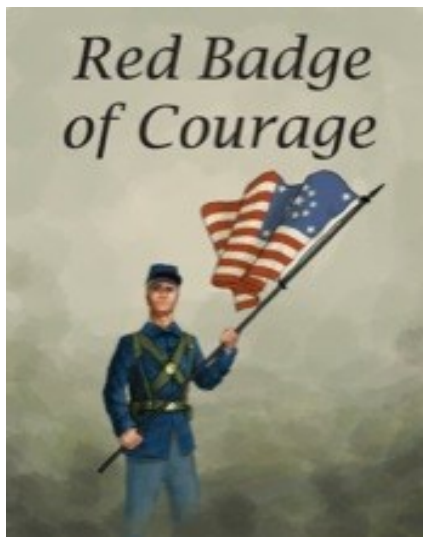
2015 Town of Deerpark Museum Programs

Members of the Town of Deerpark Museum have scheduled five programs for the year 2015. Homemade refreshments will be served. All of the programs are free except the bus tour. Please note the locations of each program, as some do not take place at the Museum. For additional information, please call 845-856-2702 or 845-856-4515 or 845-754-8070.

Schedule:

Saturday, June 20 10am-5pm **Stephen Crane Day—Civil War Displays**

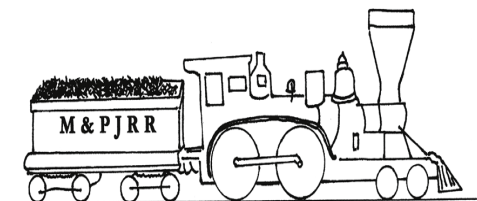
Drew Methodist Church, Sussex Street, Port Jervis, NY



Saturday, July 18, 8am-11:30am **Joseph Brant 1779 Raid Bus Tour**



Meet at Sparrowbush, New York Fire House; Reservations required (see insert)

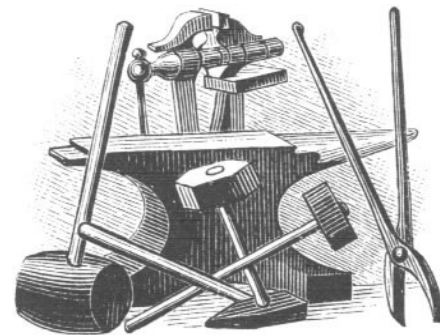


Sunday, August 23, 2pm—**Displays**, 3pm—Lecture; **Monticello & Port Jervis RR**

Presented by Joe Senese, 1863 Huguenot Schoolhouse, Huguenot, NY

Sunday, September 27, 11am-4pm **Open House—Celebrating the 325th Anniversary of the First Settlers**

1863 Huguenot Schoolhouse & Neversink Valley Grange, Huguenot, NY



Sunday, October 11, 3pm

“Stand! Hold!” A one Act Play—Broome Street Drum & Fife Corps Music

Neversink Valley Grange, Grange Rd., Huguenot, NY

We look forward to seeing you.