

Fly Creeker

NEWSLETTER of the FLY CREEK AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY (FCAHS)
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NEWS BRIEFS

- As you will notice, this is the first edition of the *Fly Creeker* to contain more than four pages (six, to be exact). This is because we are getting articles and ideas from more and more of our members, resulting in a back-log of material. Keep it coming!
- Pete Martin has prepared *Old Chapel Burying Ground*, an eight-page booklet giving a history of the graveyard at the corner of Hoke Road & County Road 26. Pete and Art Snyder have been chiefly responsible for the maintenance of this cemetery in recent years (but they will be happy to "hire" other volunteers!). An anecdote in the booklet tells about Victor Sinnott, whose home was encircled by the cemetery. Mr. Sinnott turned over a 14" by 48" stone which had been on his back step for years, and found it to be half of a gravestone (marked "Joseph S I"). Copies of the booklet can be ordered from the Trustees of the Fly Creek United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 128, Fly Creek, NY 13337. There is no charge, but donations for it -- or for the maintenance of the cemetery -- will be appreciated.
- Welcome to our newest members, Homer & Leila Martin! Since publication of the FCAHS roster in the last newsletter, we have also received renewals from charter members Rev. Kenneth Baldwin, Philip & Ruth Bresee, John & Jean Finch, and Alice Platt, along with Margaret Elkan, Lady Ostapeck, Marjorie Tillapaugh, Helen Winne, and Jim & Margaret Wolff. This brings the 1994-95 membership total to 129, as compared to the previous annual membership totals: 153, 140+, 130, 148, and 142.
- We are pleased to say that no deaths were reported from among the FCAHS membership during 1994. We suppose that our recent articles on "longest-lived Fly Creek area residents" proved to be an inspiration to you all!
- Five people will be honored for special contributions to area history on Friday, May 12, when the Local Historian Advisory Committee holds its annual meeting. The meeting, open to the public, will begin at 7 P.M. at the David Fayre House (home of the Milford Historical Association, between the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches) on Route 28 in Milford. A special program will be given, refreshments will be served, and Senator James Seward will present the awards. Among those nominated is a FCAHS member. For further information, contact Jim Habener at 286-7038.
- The February 3, 1973 issue of the *New York Times* had an article about the Postmark Collectors Club. The article was illustrated with the postmarks of five unusually-named United States towns -- and one of them was Fly Creek, NY!
- Pete Martin asks that anyone who has or knows of unusual architecture in an area building, to please supply him with a photo or information about it.
- The FCAHS is offering clearance prices on several of its promotional items. Plastic tops, imprinted "Fly Creek", are 50 cents each; pot-holders inscribed with the Society's name, and featuring Freida Snyder's artwork, are down to \$1.50 apiece; and historic Fly Creek area post cards are 55 cents each, or \$5 for the complete set of ten. These items are available for sale during FCAHS meetings; pot-holders and post cards can also be ordered through the mail (please add \$1 per item for postage and handling).

TWO CENTURIES OF TENSION

Hugh C. MacDougall submits this 200-year-old article which "must be one of the earliest published references to Fly Creek, and suggests a certain light-hearted tension between Fly Creek and Cooperstown which has presumably endured for two centuries." It appeared in the April 17, 1795 issue (Volume 1, Number 3) of the *Otsego Herald*, and read as follows:

March 26th, 1795.

At a meeting of a large and respectable number of young men in Fly Creek settlement, OLD HEAD, *in the Chair*.

Resolved unanimously, that if any female within this settlement, attends a ball or associates with any young gentleman of Cooperstown, or any other place, without leave of the chairman, shall be debarred from all the privileges of this society, and be treated by every member of this meeting with the utmost scorn and detestation.

Peter Prim, Clk.

Old Head *chairman*.

MEETINGS

The next three FCAHS meetings are slated for April 26, May 24, and June 28, 1995. In April, Florence Michaels will speak on the History of the Potts Cemetery, adding information on the family of that name. The May program will feature Pat Donnelly, speaking on the History of the Clara Welch Thanksgiving Hospital. And, in June, Doris Huxtable will present a program on Ice Harvesting. Meetings are open to the public, and begin at 7 P.M. in the Fellowship Hall (basement) of the Fly Creek United Methodist Church on County Road 26.

The most recent meetings were held on January 25, February 22, and March 22, 1995. Attending members provided their own program for the January meeting: Reminiscences of Times Past. More than a dozen members exchanged memories and documents of people, places, and things of yesteryear, particularly in the Fly Creek area. Recalled were the days before there were paved roads, indoor plumbing, or electricity, and both prices and wages were very low. In February, Peter Martin spoke about the Old Chapel Burying Ground (see News Brief #2 on page 1). The OCBG is the oldest cemetery in Fly Creek, dating back to 1792, and its 216 known "residents" include at least 12 Revolutionary War soldiers. And, in March, MerriLynn Fish presented a History of the Fly Creek Fire Department, which was founded in 1949. The Ladies' Auxiliary and the Junior Fire Department were also discussed. (Submitted by Carolyn McLean)

"THE FLY"

The following is from the Fly Creek section of the book, *Richfield Springs and Vicinity: Historical, Biographical and Descriptive*, by W. T. Bailey (New York: A. S. Barnes & Company, 1874). This passage was reprinted in the Ellsworths' "Where Nature Smiles" column of the Cooperstown *Freeman's Journal* in May, 1994:

"The ranges of mountains lying between Otsego and Canadarago Lakes, are divided by a deep valley through which flows a stream called Fly Creek, which takes its rise in the highlands of the Town of Otsego, near the southern line of the Town of Springfield, about midway between the two lakes. Issuing from the earth near a rocky ledge, at first a purling rivulet, it starts on its way to the Susquehanna, ... peacefully winding its way through green pastures and by the grassy banks of exuberant meadows, through silent and secluded dells and forest shades ... until it finally enters the Oaks Creek, about seven miles south of Canadarago Lake ... High up on the mountain-range, between Otsego Lake and the Valley of Fly Creek, and nearly surrounded by the primitive forest, is what is known or supposed to have been a small lake at an early period, but now overgrown by the thick mass of tufted vegetation which entirely envelopes its surface. This was originally called 'The Fly,' and from it the valley and village one and a half miles to the west derive their names." (Submitted by Elaine Harvey)

OTSEGO'S FINAL RESTING PLACES

The map on the back page shows the location of 22 known cemeteries situated in the Town of Otsego (other than those in the Village of Cooperstown). Since preparing this map, we have learned of other graveyards located on Bissell Road and on Jones Road. Following are names, locations, and miscellaneous information for each of the other 22 cemeteries:

- A. Adams (Forkshop):** on the Platt farm on the east side of County Road 26, south of Day Road.
- B. Bourne-Chapman:** on the west side of County Road 26, between Tanner Hill and Donlon Roads; on a hillock near the orchard and east-west fence between fields.
The stones are flat.
- C. Caulkins-Seymour:** on Hortubise Road, just off Route 205.
- D. Drake:** atop hill on Fairview Farm, west of Leatherstocking Falls and County Road 28.
- E. Fitch Hill:** at the northeast corner of Tanner Hill and Armstrong Roads in Pierstown, near the Fitch Hill school house.
- F. Fly Creek Valley:** on east side of Cemetery Road in Fly Creek.
- G. Fly Creek Village (Presbyterian):** across from the Grange Hall on the west side of Cemetery Road in Fly Creek, at the former site of the Fly Creek Presbyterian Church. Restored by Louis Grippe.
- H. Gardner:** on the east side of Johnston's Road at the junction of Routes 28/80. All stones have been removed -- does anyone know what happened to them?
- I. Hickory Grove:** in the woods on the southeast side of Red House Hill Road, near the Hickory Grove restaurant on Route 80.
- J. Hoke:** between Wedderspoon Hollow and Red House Hill Roads, in a grove of trees on Drake Farm in Pierstown, about a half-mile behind the Hickory Grove restaurant on Route 80.
- K. Hribar:** single stone on a hillock in a field, on the east side of County Road 26 north of Stone House Road in Fly Creek. The 1828 stone appears to read "Charles Thornton".
- L. Hyde (Schoolhouse):** on the west side of County Road 26, just southwest of the junction of Tanner Hill Road.
- M. Old Chapel Burying Ground (Fly Creek):** near the southwest corner of the junction of Hoke Road and County Road 26 (Pail Shop Corners). Maintained by Peter Martin and Art Snyder, it belongs by deed to the Fly Creek United Methodist Church.
- N. Parslow Farm:** on the northeast side of Parslow Road, one-fourth mile from Routes 28/80. All but one stone (for Mercy Stone, d. 1837) were moved.
- O. Pierce (Fitch Hill):** on the McManus farm at Fitch Hill, inside the sharp turn on Tripp Hill Road, near the junction of Tanner Hill and Armstrong Roads.
- P. Pierstown:** near Pierstown on Metcalf Hill on the east side of Huff Road, just north of the junction with Smith Cross Road.
- Q. St. Mary's:** on the east side of Route 28, across from Smith Ford, just north of Phoenix Mills Cross Road.
- R. Snowden Hill:** on the Fish farm on the east side of Vic Breese Road, about three-fourths of a mile west of the junction of Routes 205 and 80.
- S. Steere:** at the junction of Christian Hill and Jarvis Roads. No visible evidence.
- T. Taylor Family:** on the east side of County Road 26, between Bedbug Hill and Honey Joe Roads, about three miles north of the Fly Creek four-corners.
- U. Twelve Thousand:** on the Getman farm on the west side of Rose's Hill Road, north of the junction with Ainslie Road.
- V. Whipple:** about 100 feet west of Glimmerglen Road, across from Dr. Laidlaw's home, near the tallest pine tree about three feet in diameter.

Anyone having corrections or additions to this list is asked to bring them to the attention of the editor. (Submitted by Florence Michaels)

JARVIS WITH AN "A"

The first white child born on the Cooper patent was William Cooper Jarvis (1787-1868), one of a long line of Jarvises in this area. Some historians have spelled the family name "Jervis", probably an incorrect translation of old handwritten documents. However, all the evidence indicates that "Jarvis" is the correct spelling. In checking the Otsego County Grantee-Grantor Index (1791-1899), we find 138 transactions listed under the name of Jarvis, but none under Jervis.

We have information on the Jarvis family dating back more than three centuries. Thomas Jarvis was born in 1669, married Abigail Smith on June 14, 1726, and died in 1732. Their son, William Jarvis (March 29, 1727-June 15, 1772) married Mary Wright (March 11, 1730-December 22, 1804), and the couple had eleven children. Two "died young", and one, Kent, died at Saratoga during the Revolutionary War. Another was "Bill" Jarvis (December 30, 1753-February 14, 1830), a doctor who married Mary White (December 25, 1761-July 6, 1820) on August 30, 1780. These are the Jarvises that settled on the Cooper patent, in what is now the Town of Otsego.

Dr. and Mrs. Jarvis had seven children, the third of which was the aforementioned William Cooper Jarvis (named after the man who sold the Jarvises the land: Judge William Cooper, founder of Cooperstown and father of James Fenimore Cooper). William Cooper Jarvis was born August 25, 1787, and married Daphne Taylor (born August 9, 1793) on February 25, 1813. They had two children: Lorenzo Taylor Jarvis (born March 22, 1815, died 1883), and Erastus Jarvis (1826-27). William C. Jarvis died on March 11, 1868.

Lorenzo T. Jarvis married Abigail Preston Jarvis (November 28, 1815 or December 22, 1818-June 7, 1904) on October 3, 1841. They had three children: Rufus Preston Jarvis (November 6, 1842-January 14, 1919); Emmá (born November 22, 1845); and Mary (born October 22, 1848). The two daughters married cousins named Hicks and moved to Long Island, NY, where they reportedly taught school.

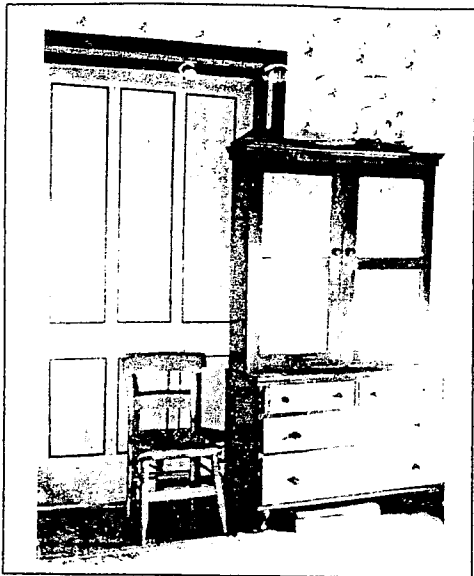
Rufus P. Jarvis married Annie Rice (October 8, 1860-September 15, 1917) on November 1, 1883. They were the parents of Eloise Jarvis Pope (died May 17, 1951), who was the mother of Rufus Jarvis Pope. Rufus Pope married my sister, Janice, which explains my interest in the Jarvis family.

The following is part of the text of a paper given to my sister by an in-law. She believes it was written by Emma Jarvis Hicks:

"William Cooper Jarvis was the son of Dr. Bill Jarvis and Mary White, who came from Burlington, NJ ... (He) was given 100 acres for his name by Judge William Cooper. This farm was situated between Fly Creek and Cooperstown.

"Grandfather Jarvis was interested in brass manufacturing and had a factory at Fly Creek, but the hard times following the War of 1812 caused the business to fail and he lost his property, including the 100-acre farm.

"He was married in 1813 to Daphine (sic) Taylor by Father Nash in the Episcopal Church in Cooperstown ... Erastus Taylor gave his daughter Daphine a small farm called the Barrac Farm, just south of the Babcock Place on 12,000. When (the Jarvises' son) Lorenzo Taylor Jarvis married Abigail Preston, they lived all together on the Barrac Farm. The house has since been taken down. It was here that Rufus and Emma E. Jarvis were born. Lorenzo Jarvis later bought the adjoining Turner Farm, where Eloise Pope now lives. Mary Jarvis was born there. In addition, he bought the Smith lot over on the mountain and a wood lot on the mountain to the north where we used to go as children to pick up chips after the winter wood cutting.



was (the grandparents') sitting room (opening into the bedroom).

"Grandfather William had the trade of cabinet maker (editor's note: the picture on the left shows a cabinet made by William Cooper Jarvis). Fifty years ago, (every neighbor owned) pieces of furniture made by him. His shop was located by the brook in the big meadow near the gulf road leading to the sugar bush. It was finally burned down.

"When the maple logs were taken to the saw mill to be sawed into boards, care was taken to look for curly maple or birds eye maple, and such pieces were saved to make bedsteads, tables, chests of drawers, and desks. These old maple pieces are very highly-valued and much sought-after these days.

"Grandfather William used to play the flute on winter evenings. He would sit by the big fireplace and play while Grandmother Daphine would sing hymns. The big kitchen was the room now used as a living room, and the present kitchen

"The children had many chores to do before and after school: (picking) up stones in the meadow across the road, (cutting) up apples and (feeding) the geese. Grandfather had a flock of 12 geese which were picked twice each year to make feather beds and pillows. Little girls had to knit all their own stockings (another after-school chore).

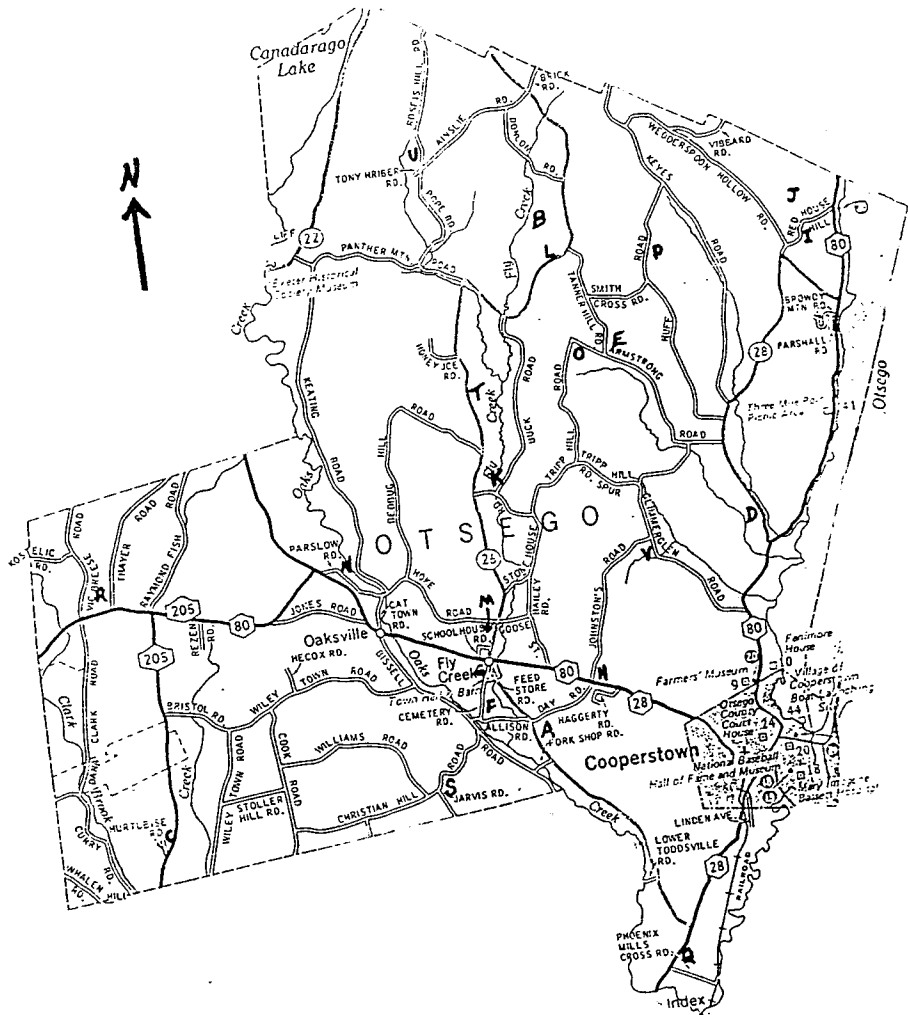
"Nearly every family need was supplied by the farm. Sheep supplied food and wool for clothing. Flax was grown and every family had its flax wheel and wool wheel for spinning. The dye tub stood in the corner by the chimney. Aunt Dillie Gibbs did the weaving for the neighborhood. Very little money was handled. Butter and eggs were taken to town to exchange for cotton goods -- silk for a best dress or a shawl that was so carefully used that it lasted a lifetime. Everyday shoes were of home-tanned calf skin, and boots from cowhide. (Crops included wheat, rye, corn, and trout potatoes.)

"Hops were the most profitable crop. Charcoal was used to help dry the hops and Grandfather Lorenzo Jarvis would make a pile of green logs, cover it with earth, and let it slowly burn. If it burned too fast, the children dipped water from the brook and quenched the fire. It took a week to burn the charcoal and Grandfather sat up nights to watch it.

"I remember hearing Grandfather William tell of going to Cooperstown on horseback (in his youth), to join in a bear-hunt to rid the country of these troublesome neighbors. And, when Grandfather Taylor first came from Vermont to Otsego, the log house and out-buildings had to be surrounded by a stockade to keep bears and wolves out." (Submitted by Carolyn McLean)



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