

# The Quarterly JOURNAL

*A Publication of the Greene County Historical Society, Inc.*

U. S. Route 9-W

Coxsackie, N. Y. 12051

Vol. 4, Issue 2

★

Summer, 1980

## EARLY TEAMSTERS IN THE TOWN OF GREENVILLE

—Edna Ingalls Adams

My earliest recollections are of the stories my father told of his horses. My father was Stanley I. Ingalls (1892-1969) who lived all his life in the township of Greenville. As a small child I learned how important it was to treat the horses properly, letting them rest occasionally when pulling heavy loads uphill, rubbing them down and feeding them. The worst thing my father could say of a man was that he was cruel to his horses.



*Stanley I. Ingalls with Team  
Route 81 near Prevost Manor House*

As I grew up, I gradually came to realize that horses were a very important part of my father's livelihood. His father, Truman Ingalls, had established a thriving teamster business, hauling for the general stores in the Greenville area. These merchants would order "boughten" goods which was shipped upriver on the various steamboat lines to the Coxsackie Landing. Outgoing loads of farm produce — fruit, vegetables, hay, straw and dairy products were also delivered to the Coxsackie Landing for transshipment to the New York metropolitan area. After the West Shore Railroad was built in 1883, hauling to and from the West Shore freight station became another phase of Truman Ingall's freight operation.

The several general stores and industries provided the Ingalls and other teamsters with steady business. There were four stores in Greenville — John and Ed Roe's, M. P. Stevens, Bentley and McCabe (tinsmiths), Hart's (with Orrin Stevens Insurance). In Norton Hill there were Peter Steven's general store, VerPlancks' wagon shop, a fruit evaporator and a creamery. Freehold had one general store, a hotel, tannery, brickyard and gristmill. Everett Palmer had a general store in South Westerlo; there were two general stores in Medusa.

*(continued on page 2)*

## A PREHISTORIC HOMICIDE AT KAAKS-AKI

When Grant Van Loan began digging post holes for the Robert LeFergys at 115 South River Street, Coxsackie, on October 16, 1931, there was no expectation he was about to make a unique archaeological find — a skeleton with an Indian arrowhead embedded in the spinal column. And when he did make the discovery he had the good sense to seek immediate help from Noel T. Clarke, state archaeologist.

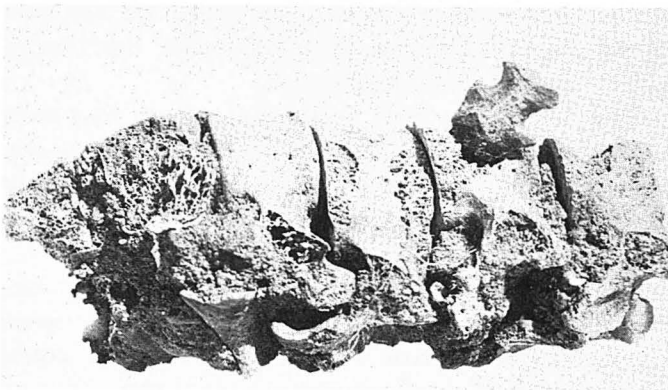
Some facts could be established from the site but much was conjecture. Mr. Clarke believed the victim to be one of the peaceful Algonquin tribe that controlled the Flint Mine Hill, four miles to the westward. An examination indicated the arrow, with its polished flint arrowhead, had entered from the left side, penetrating the flesh muscle and on into the spinal column about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an inch. His age was judged to be about 60 from the fact that the teeth were worn down almost to the gums, a characteristic of aged Indians.

Whether the Indian was buried by his own tribe or quickly by his redskin assailants is a point we will never know. However, he was not buried in the normal fashion in a sleeping position curled up on one side but rather stretched out on his back. Neither were the customary personal relics found in the excavation pit aside from a well-shaped flint knife.

The skeleton with the arrowhead embedded in it was removed to the NYS Museum for subsequent study, it being the only known example of such a find.

It was conjectured the Indian may have had flint for sale to a more warlike Indian party coming southward by canoe in prehistoric times. After the completion of the barter along the river shore he could have been killed for his remaining flint or other possessions.

*(continued on page 10)*



## GREENVILLE TEAMSTERS *(continued from page 1)*

Truman Ingalls, Stanley's father, started his teamster business as a young married man. In my grandmother's diary (Carrie Spalding Ingalls, 1863-1951) we read: "Went to the river. Trum took cat straw." One day in 1890: "Brought up cooper stock for Orrin Abrams." An entry in 1893 reads: "Three teams went to Cocksackie," and later: "Four teams to Cocksackie with hay."

Truman had four sons, so he had a homemade labor force. All of his sons — Warren, Ransom, Stanley and Clarence — were teamsters or else worked in the sawmill, another part of my grandfather's business. (A relative, Edward Ingalls, was also a part of the family work force.) Stanley began making these trips to Cocksackie as a young man of 12 years. These early hauls of freight were on the Cocksackie Turnpike.

As heretofore mentioned, there were other teamsters in the township and its surrounding area. Ernest Slater had teams and later on one of the first trucks, using this jitney for both freight and passengers. He was an excellent mechanic and also one of the best sawyers in the country.

Ambrose Cunningham, one of our more prominent citizens who established a furniture store and undertaker's parlor, was an early teamster; he was among the first to convert to the use of the motor truck. Also Arthur Evans was an early teamster, later becoming a Superintendent of Roads in our town. Grover Parks was a teamster from Freehold and also delivered supplies to Cairo. (This is the same Grover Parks who, during the "boot-leg" era, was tortured by Jack "Legs" Diamond.) Ray Traver and Ernest Carpenter were teamsters from Medusa. Other early drivers were Homer Adriance, Roscoe Velie, Theron Griffin, William Gédney and Leon Walker. Niles Van Auken drove the mail from the Medusa area. He had two teams, keeping one in Grapeville. This way, with a change of teams he was able to make the trip down to Cocksackie and back in one day. (His son is now the owner of the largest trucking company in this section — the Van Auken Express.)

These men were all using the same Cocksackie Turnpike and there was a good spirit of camaraderie as they helped each other up the hills. One teamster would unhook his own team to double the "horsepower" in case of another's need.

This was a big fruit producing area at that time and in the fall of the year the traffic was heavy. Unfortunately spraying became a necessity and many local farmers found it impracticable to continue in this business.

I was born in Surprise, where my parents were living in order to have a home half-way between Cocksackie and Norton Hill. Thus my father could make the trip back home in one day. Here are two

excerpts from my mother's diary (Eleanor Goff Ingalls, 1895-1950): "We got up at 4 a.m. Stanley made his down trip and got home about 4:30 p.m." The next day he made "his up trip and got home around 5."

The following excerpt reminded me of one of my father's stories. "To Athens with lumber, 16 below zero. They (my father and my uncle, Edward Ingalls) suffered awful coming from Athens to Cocksackie at night." They walked the whole distance to keep from freezing.

Another item: "unloaded Bert's phosphate, 15 tons." Also: "Stanley went down to Cocksackie and unloaded a car of phosphate for Niles Gifford."

In Cocksackie between the "down" load delivery and his "up" return load my father also shoveled coal from the railroad cars and took it down to the river boats for their engines. He had trouble getting men to help him who would work hard at this back-breaking job of shoveling coal. In desperation he once went into a bar in Cocksackie (perhaps the old Cobblestone Inn) and offered 50 cents a day to any man who could keep up with him. Andy Speenburgh volunteered and really did keep the job. Fifty cents was a lot of money in those days.

But before long changes came. It was still the hard, back-breaking work, but it now could go faster. February 19, 1917, is an important entry in my mother's diary: "Stanley and Ransie went to Albany to pay \$100 on our truck" and then in a couple of days, "the men came with our truck." (The truck, a Federal, was actually purchased from Ivan Hannay in Westerlo.) And with this a whole new era started.

For example, this diary excerpt: "Trip to Cocksackie then back to Norton Hill and then to Cocksackie and back home!" In one day. However, for about a year the teams of horses were kept. Especially in the winter months the early trucks were very limited when the roads were impassable. But at other times they could deliver twice as fast as the teams, though their top speed was 12 miles an hour. Some of the names of the early trucks were Federal, Hope-Hartford and Mack.

The brakes on these trucks were very poor and whereas in the days of the horses you occasionally saw a run-away horse (great excitement), you now saw the run-away truck. The driver would stand on the running board screaming, "Look out! No brakes!" One time, this happened to my father coming down Potter Hollow Mt. and he was just about ready to jump when the truck slowed enough for him to shift and stop.

Even in the 1920's my brother, Randall, as a little boy would jump off the truck when it was going up

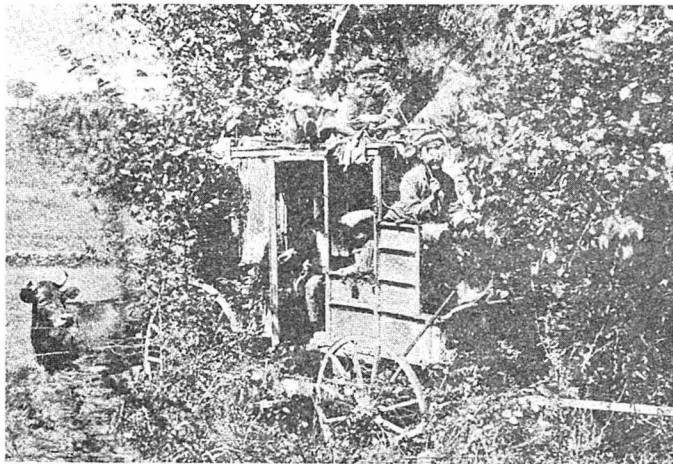
*(continued on page 3)*

## GREENVILLE TEAMSTERS *(continued from page 2)*

high hills to block the wheels if power gave out. After a wait, they could go on and in this way they "jumped" the truck up the hills.

Early drivers would probably be classified as teamsters today, although none joined the Teamster Labor Union, which had been organized in 1899. Most of them were involved in owner operated businesses.

Besides teamsters there were the stage drivers. The stage serving our area was run by Jim Evans of Greenville. The Evans stage carried passengers as well as mail. Other stage owners and drivers were Joe Alverson, Ray Traver and, in 1910, my uncle, Warren Ingalls (later the owner of the well-known boarding house Ingalside Farm). When I was a young girl the mail truck was still called the stage.



*Abandoned Greenville Stage (Photo 1894)*

The old stage coach used by Jim Evans was finally put to rest and was falling apart at the Evans home on Ingalside Road. Then a motion picture company heard of its existence, bought it, and had it renovated. It was used in several movies and then given back to Jim Evans' brother, George, who lived in Albany. A special carriage house was built for it.

People who bought the first automobiles in the early part of this century sometimes became jitney drivers. Henry O'Keefe was one of them. He would take passengers wherever they needed to go, whether for shopping, to meet trains or the Hudson River boat, or to be married. He took my mother and father to the Methodist parsonage in Greenville to be married. He waited until the knot was tied and then took them down to the West Shore Railroad station in Coxsackie, where they left for a week's honeymoon in New York City. (In 1937 Stanley Ingalls became the founder of the G N H Lumber Company in Norton Hill.)

I thought it important to have a written record — or at least a partial record — of some of the events of this era in our local area. Already, a lot of them have been forgotten. Another generation, for instance, would not realize the heavy "team" traffic there was

on the old Turnpike, during the last part of the last century and the early decades of this century, and also the busy import — export commerce on our river, roads and rails.

*—Editor's Note: Edna Ingalls Adams is a descendant of one of the pioneer town of Greenville families. The first Ingalls in America came to the Salem area in Massachusetts with Governor Endicott in 1628. They became the original settlers of Lynn, Massachusetts. Jacob Ingalls came to the Greenville area from New England in 1793. He cleared the land and had a farm just north of Norton Hill over the line in Albany County. The farm homestead of Stanley Ingalls, however, lies in Greene County and was his grandfather Ransom Ingalls'. It has been in the Ingalls family since 1859 and is still owned by a direct descendant, Adrian Elliott.*

□ □ □ □ □

□◇ Watch the local newspapers for the registration for the 1980 Lecture Series to be held this early fall. The content of last year's 50th Anniversary series earned well-merited praise, with more than ninety area residents enrolled.

□◇ The major restoration work on the Bronck National Historic Landmark buildings is proceeding on schedule. Much of the 1663 stone house work was completed last fall with an assist from the mild late fall weather. This April Mr. Van Woert's craftsmen were back on site setting up scaffolding and otherwise getting ready to conserve the deteriorated brick on the 1738 structure. Repairs to the north wall, the parapets, the dormers, as well as the roof replacement, should be completed by August. In the meantime the museum staff is learning to live with "dust and dirt" and general confusion. A crew of CETA workmen should be working to repair the Dutch stoop, as well as painting much of the wood trim on both houses. Like everything else, the money does not go as far as we want it to but the buildings have been saved from major deterioration.

□◇ Membership dues are still coming in. The public is reminded the Greene County Historical Society receives no annual appropriation from either town or county government. Neither have inflationary costs spared the Bronck Museum. Miss Barbara Van Orden, Box 284, Route 3, Catskill, New York, 12414, is our Financial Secretary and will accept your checks for both new or renewal memberships and for a little extra toward the conservation of the buildings.

□◇ The Journal of the society is making new friends beyond the confines of New York State; we get weekly inquiries. Subscriptions do make a thoughtful birthday or Christmas gift and come on a quarterly basis. Don't you have a friend or relative who would like to know more concerning the history of this region?

Golden Wedding

Doctor King's medical practice in Cairo spanned fifty-one years, and any reference to it was meticulously excluded from Lovisa's journal. The doctor's health was often precarious. Lovisa repeatedly mentioned his severe colds, and Edwin Tremain wrote on the occasion of a golden wedding anniversary celebration in October 1876:

I cannot help reminding the Doctor how many times during the last 20 or 30 years he has been just going to die with consumption and how often he has disappointed us all by living right on for half a century. I think it proves how good a wife you have been to him. It certainly shows that he did not know anything about his disease, or that he was a good enough doctor to cure consumption! Let us give him credit for the latter supposition.

Lovisa wrote in her journal:

1876. Oct. 30. Mon. Israel Tremain and his wife and Pluma St. John, Mr. Peloubet, Rufus and Lucia King, Lucina Henderson, and Delia Graham came. No more of the brothers could come on account of sickness in their families, which was a great disappointment to us. Consequently a number of our friends and neighbors called to offer congratulations, and were treated to cake and [ice] cream. Mr. P. read "The Hanging of the Crane" from a book presented to me by Sister Pluma. Then he and Rufus each made a short speech, before the company dispersed. Had a very pleasant gathering, but it recalled so many sad memories, so many of our dear ones gone, that it was far from being a joyous occasion. Next day Margaret and Pluma left for the Centennial, Mr. Peloubet for N.Y. Israel and Harriet went to Oakhill, back here same night, and next morn, Nov. 1, left for home, Cousin Elizabeth for Catskill, and Hattie [widow of Edwin Gilbert] for Rochester.

Lyman Tremain, ill and unable to come, sent a vermeil fish knife and fork from Tiffany's, and wrote his recollection of the wedding:

I am seven years of age. The occasion is the wedding of my Sister Lovisa. The place is the old homestead in Oak Hill. During the day carriages with guests have been arriving from distant places, and these vehicles fill the yard. The marriage ceremony has been performed. Evening has come. The old homestead is illuminated and filled with guests. Music and dancing are the order of the evening. The eastern half of the house, as the

second floor is not yet divided into rooms, is used for the festive occasion. My father [Levi Tremain] weighing some 250 pounds, always full of fun, enters into the spirit of the occasion, and is dancing, greatly to the amusement of all.

Lyman's letter went on to recall a later visit of Levi and Lovisa:

The Doctor is walking back and forth with his hands under his coat tails and I hear mother say with a smile, "The Doctor is so nervous that he cannot sit long at a time." That Doctor has a distinguished appearance. His flowing ruffled shirt bosom, his massive gold watch chain and seal, and his general aspect indicate the gentleman. His head has become in part prematurely bald from study and reflection. His countenance has an intellectual, professional aspect, while his classic nose is one which a Roman Emperor might envy! As to Lovisa, she is moving about, full of life and fun. Her handsome form, her black eyes, her cheeks marked with health and beauty, in short, her whole appearance impressed upon my youthful fancy the opinion that she was one of the most beautiful women I have ever seen! To tell the honest truth, I have never seen any good reason to change that opinion.

Last Years

Lovisa's regard for Levi, unproclaimed in the journal while he lived, characteristically found expression at his death:

1878. July 10. My dear, dear husband died, had been very feeble for a long time, but Mr. Hill [resident farmer] fell from a load of hay on him, knocked him down and hurt him very much, so that he died in a few hours. The accident was about 7 P.M., he died about 11. Was unconscious most of the time, but it did seem terrible that he must be taken in that way after passing through so many severe sicknesses. But God's ways are not our ways, and I must try to be submissive and feel that all is for the best, although I feel that I cannot do without his advice and counsel. And oh, there is such a vacancy everywhere. I feel as though I was walking in a dream, that it cannot be real that he is gone forever. The funeral was held in the Presbyterian Church. Mr. Freese preached from 1st Peter 4:7. It was a very rainy P.M. when we committed earth to earth and dust to dust and came back to our desolate home.

It is no wonder that the journal thereafter is fraught with intimations of mortality.

1878. Nov. 30. Brother Lyman Tremain died in New York after a long and painful illness. . . . Thus another one is taken from our family circle, the fifth in less than one year.

## JOURNAL OF LOVISA KING *(continued from page 4)*

1881. Mar. 6. Harriet Tremain, wife of brother Israel, died after a short illness, so our family is passing away, oh how rapidly. But three of our large family left. Which of us will be next called we know not, but we know it will be but a short time before we shall all follow. May we all be ready to meet in that better home where partings are unknown, is my earnest daily prayer.

June 22. Margaret, Caroline, and Rose left for Mecklenburg in market waggon, expecting to stop over one day in Auburn, quite an undertaking for Cal, who has not been out of town in over four years. And I am left alone, I think for the first time in my life, and Oh, how vividly it brings to mind the dear ones that have left us forever, but I know I soon must follow them, and hope and pray that I may be in readiness when the summons comes.

1883. Aug. 6. My birthday, 75 years old. It does not seem possible. Probably shall see very few more birthdays, if any.

1884. Dec. 21. Amos Cornwall died very suddenly. . . . Oh, what a warning to be always ready.

1885. Oct. 30. . . . I was thankful to get safely home again [after a trip to Mecklenburg]. Probably I shall never take so long a journey again. Am too old to think of going so far.

1887. Dec. 7. Mrs. Lennon passed away aged 85, so the old ones are almost gone. I am almost the only one left. My turn must come soon, my prayer is that I may be ready.

1889. Aug. 6. My 81st birthday. Does not seem possible that I am as old. No one here, not well enough for company, (no girl).

1890. Aug. 6. My 82d birthday, too warm to have company.

Sept. 13, Sat., at two o'clock in A.M., very suddenly of heart disease, Rufus H. King died. Went to bed in usual health, but before morn had breathed his last. Truly in an hour that ye think not the son of man cometh. I feel as though my main dependence was gone, for he had the whole care and charge of my business, and no one can fill his place.

Her birthdays, when mentioned at all, were then passed over without homily.

1891. Aug. 6. My 83d birthday, spent it visiting with Hattie [widow of Edwin Gilbert].

1892. Aug. 6. My birthday. Mrs. Gray, Mrs. Edward Stevens, and Dominie King and family visited here. Very, very warm.

1897. Rose came home. My 89th birthday. Mrs. King was here to tea.

1899. Aug. 6. My 91st birthday, I was not able to go out that day.

1900. Aug. 6. Had a reception in honor of my 92nd birthday, in the eve, about 40 present, had cake and cream for refreshments.

1901. Aug. 6. My birthday, rainy, many flowers sent in but few calls.

Although she lived until December, her last journal entry was:

1902. Jan. 17. Mr. Johnson died, Aunt Anna's cousin.

### Miscellany

What was going on in the world made few ripples in the King household. Lovisa mentioned the "great eclipse" of February 11, 1831, without comment. March 12, 1888, drew only, "The worst snowstorm and blizzard ever known here." The Civil War was remarked only as it affected the family. On February 8, 1865, the death of Lyman Tremain's son Frederick was noted. On April 2, 1865, "Frank Tremain was shot whilst leading his regiment." She wrote

1881. July 2. Attempted assassination of President Garfield.

Sept. 19. Garfield died.

1901. Sept. 6. President McKinley was shot at Buffalo. 13th died [correct date 14th]. 17th was taken to Washington, 18th to Canton, Ohio, his home, 19th was buried.

The Pan-American Exposition President McKinley was attending was not noted.

The building of the Cairo Railroad in 1885 must have stirred the village but her only reference to it was:

1885. Oct. 6. I went to Catskill on the cars, my first ride on our Cairo road. Next morn Cousin Elizabeth and myself started for Mecklenburg. Stopped at Auburn, staid two nights at Edward Tremain's, had a nice visit.

Lovisa had her own system for keeping relatives straight. Brother Edwin Tremain's wife was "Mary Edwin," surely a felicitous designation, and brother Israel's wife was "Harriet Israel," to distinguish her from brother William's wife Harriet. But she referred to her sister-in-law from her children's point of view as "Aunt" Lucina, that lady's daughter, her niece, as "Cousin Lucina," and the second wife of her brother-in-law Fred St. John as "Aunt" Anna. Nephew Daniel Tremain's Mary Frances was "Mary Frank" rather than Mary Daniel, and she became "Frank," not to be confused with grandson Frank Palen.

*(continued on Page 6)*

Tea and supper were used interchangeably for the evening meal. Place names ending in burg were sometimes written with a final h, sometimes without. "The west" could be Syracuse or Auburn or Mecklenburg(h). Wives were "Mrs. Dr. Clarkson" (May 31, 1864) and "Mrs. Dr. Wickes" (December 16, 1880.) An elderly lady who died evoked, "Truly a Mother in Israel has gone" (of Mrs. Naylor March 25, 1878, and of Mrs. Tryon November 4, 1883).

She was an active member of the Cairo Presbyterian Church, although her journal does not detail all the sessions — Sunday school, morning service, afternoon meeting, evening service, — that her daughters and granddaughter were wont to attend. If no session was held in the Presbyterian Church, the ladies went to the Methodist or Baptist or Episcopal service. This ecumenism evidently did not extend to mixed marriage, however. At the end of granddaughter Rose's notebook for 1882 (she had just turned twenty) is a draft of a note to a young man who had fallen into the habit of seeing her home from the Sunday night Presbyterian service:

I was somewhat surprised the other night and could not at the time give you a decided answer. I have since thought it over and I would allow you to accompany me to church were it not that is the eve for service in your church and I would not wish to lead any from their duty. Altho probably it does not appear to you that it is your duty to attend the church of which you are a member, I have never been allowed to go to others when there was preaching in ours before I belonged to it and now I do not wish to. It is through Mother's influence that I write to you but she does not think it right for you to leave the Methodist and does not wish me to encourage you in so doing.

Lovisa wrote regularly of the doings of the Presbyterian church and its financial problems. A donation to raise the minister's salary was held each year and she reported on its success to the end of her life. The low point was \$48 on February 4, 1891, "small gathering, small donation." On February 14, 1894, the proceeds were \$82, "well for hard times." Last mentioned was:

1901. Dec. 13. Donation for Mr. French, nice evening and a large donation, \$100.

It was not the largest donation. Feb. 6, 1873, it was \$104; Dec. 11, 1895, it was \$125. She did not report the contributions of produce and firewood from the farmers and goods from the merchants. One hopes they were forthcoming in Cairo as in other communities at the time.

Suppers and sociables raised funds for the running expenses of the church throughout the year and for repairs and maintenance.

1865. Mar. 8. Held a festival at the parsonage to make up arrearage. Bad night but did well.

1890. Aug. 20. Had a Fair and Festival and musical entertainment in the church yard and session room, a large turn out, proceeds over \$130, more than enough to pay off our debt for repairing the church, over which we are all jubilant.

She did not approve plays and cantatas, and said so in a letter to Gertrude Palen:

. . . Cairo has gone crazy over Dramas and dancing. The Episcopalians have had two or three nights each time and now our church women are getting up one. These plays are the ruination of churches, take away all spirituality. They say all do it but that does not make it right. I hope the evil will cure itself.

The Sewing Society met regularly for good works and incidental sociability and refreshments, and produced innumerable quilts. On October 6, 1897, Lovisa mentioned having pieced two worsted quilts. She was 89 years old.

The conduct of church affairs required a good deal of manual labor as well as moral and financial support.

1876. April 10. Had bee to clean parsonage, expecting Mr. and Mrs. Roe to occupy it.

1883. Feb. 27. Mr. and Mrs. Offer left for their new home. Took the neighbors a week to get them packed and ready.

But

Apr. 6. Worked at parsonage finishing Mr. Offer's packing.

1883. May 14. Mr. Roe's family went to the parsonage to stay and glad were we to get them back to Cairo again, but oh, what a job to move and get settled, and I hope he will remain in Cairo as long as I live.

However, the Roes left May 2, 1889, and on May 7

Had a general bee to clean parsonage and get it ready for our next minister.

Lovisa King was a pillar of the church. The evidence is not so clear about the doctor. The impression is strong in this writer's memory that he was an unbeliever for the saving of whose soul his womenfolk were capable of organizing prayer sessions. In view of the King family's health history and the general state of medical knowledge at the time, it would seem reasonable to surmise that a physician might have had a little difficulty with the

(continued on Page 7)

**JOURNAL OF LOVISA KING** (continued from Page 6)

concept of a deity committed to noting the sparrow's fall. Were Lovisa's hopeful pronouncements on death a determined whistling to keep her own courage up? Levi King's biographical sketch in the 1884 Greene County History is of interest in this connection. "He was very successful in his practice and enjoyed the confidence of the whole community . . . He was active in all works of benevolence and reform, and was one of the pioneers of the temperance cause in this locality. . . . He was prominent in politics, at first a whig, and being a strong anti-slavery man he was among the first to identify himself with the republican party. His father served with distinction in the war of the Revolution. His father and mother were both members of the Presbyterian church and held strong Calvinist views." In all the kind remarks about the late doctor, not a word was written about his own church connection.

Namesake

On May 30, 1898, Rose's daughter Lovisa was born. Great granddaughter Lovisa, the late Mrs. T. Howard Smith, will herself be remembered for her unstinting contributions to the work of the Burroughs Club and of the public library in Roxbury, New York, where she lived for more than fifty years, and for many other endeavors that extended beyond her community.



*Lovisa King — aged 81 years — Namesake Lovisa Vedder Smith Oct. 1898*

Grandma King, in the four years the journal continued, referred to her namesake repeatedly without calling her by name.

- 1898. July 5. Rose came home with baby.
- Sept. 28. Mrs. Hall came here, helped take care of baby.
- Oct. 8. Rose and baby went to Syracuse.
- 1899. Mar. 30. Rose and baby came here.
- Sept. 22. Rose and baby left for Syracuse.
  
- 1900. Apr. 20. Rose and baby came.
- June 30. Rose and baby went to Leeds in Express to meet Wellington.

July 17. Rose and baby came from Leeds.

Aug. 14. I fell with baby across the drain, hurt one hand quite badly, baby not at all.

Oct. 10. Rose and baby left for Syracuse for the winter, which leaves me very lonely again.

By 1901 baby does become G. Lovisa (once), Lovisa (once) and G.L. (twice). Whatever the reason for not calling the child by name, it was not lack of affection. She wrote to Gertrude Palen in 1900, "I am Grandma to all, even the Dominie [Mr. French], so I do not get very lonesome. I read a great deal. What a wonder my eyes hold out so, read till 10 o'clock every night, and I like quiet, don't have any too much when baby is here. I can hardly wait, I want to see her so."

The End

Grandma King died December 14, 1902, conscious to the last. Rose, who had returned to Cairo September 5 to stay the rest of the year, wrote in her journal, "She was taken worse the night of Dec. 11, Thursday. . . . Early Friday A.M. I called in the doctor and he saw she was worse. When I wanted to give her medicine she said, 'Rose, I can't take it, I am dying,' and from that time until she passed away just before church time Sunday morning she did not take any nourishment."

In a yellowed clipping from the local newspaper, her obituary begins,

Lovisa Peck, relict of the late Dr. Levi King, died at her home in this village Sunday morning, after being confined to her bed for nearly ten months. Her ailment was peculiar to a woman of her age, laying [sic] for months wasting away,

and ends,

How many changes and how much sorrow she has seen in her ninety-four years. She has seen our country grow from a few small colonies [sic] to the great and powerful country it is today. She has seen the development of the great West, and the productions of all the great inventions. She has seen the stage coach give way to the steam car, the needle to the sewing machine, the sickle to the reaper, the pack-horse to the telegraph. She has seen the distance shortened to London from months to a few days. She has beheld old things pass away and all things become new.

More than this, she has followed to the tomb her husband and eight of her children, and grieved over the death of all the friends of her youth, leaving her, as a last leaf on the tree, as it were.

Peace to her ashes. She has gone, but will not be forgotten.

Truly, a Mother in Israel was gone.

□ □ □ □ □

## HIGH FALLS, TOWN OF CATSKILL — Part II

—Elsie and Barbara Van Orden

Farmers around High Falls sold produce through Saugerties more often than Catskill. In winter they hauled merchandise by sleigh. Smiths buried potatoes in the ground, then dug them out in spring to be sold to the Irish at Quarryville. Stone quarries began producing in 1832, and brought Scotch and Irish workers to this area, among them the Hugh Smiths and the Cherritree family. Nels Hoff, Sr. was a stone hauler for many years. All winter the flagstone slabs were stacked on docks along the river, to be shipped south when the ice went out. High Falls stone was shipped primarily through Smith's Landing, now Cementon. Remains of one quarry can be seen behind Hattie Myers' house. This was once mined by James Sterritt, Sr., around the turn of the century; in winter ice was harvested from the quarry holes.

Legend also tells of a coal mine along the Cauterskill Creek on the old Houck Farm, about a mile from High Falls. An opening was dug into the side of the hill and shored up with timbers. A pickaxe was used to loosen chunks of coal by hand, and Sylvester Houck burned the coal in his cookstove. A few years ago the property's present owner wanted a well drilled on the ridge above the coal deposit. A local dowser couldn't detect the presence of any water and when the well-driller came, he kept bringing up coal grindings on the bit, but no water.

The Sterritt family bought numerous land parcels near High Falls, including one from John B. and Franklin Smith, brothers of Rufus who moved to Brooklyn. Sterritt came from Green Lake and was thirty years older than his wife. They raised a family of six boys and six girls at the falls, and had a large lumbering operation. They also ran a store in the building located where Ms. Sylvia Samuels now resides. The post office was located in Sterritt's store, and was changed from High Falls to Great Falls when too much confusion arose with the other High Falls in Ulster County. The store burned in 1905 and after that the mail went through Saxton Post Office. Cowheys opened a small store in the stone house at High Falls corner. This house is built of cut stone, and is therefore newer than the rough fieldstone houses of Ulster County. Before 1900 a Miss Mary Morris lived there, though who built the house is a mystery. Sterritts lived in the large framed house next door.

Old "Gouger" Sterritt had studied law, but for some reason never was admitted to the bar. He did serve as legal advisor to his neighbors, particularly to older residents who were unable to read and write; he sometimes tried cases for them. Sterritt was also notorious for letting his cattle and hogs run freely

through the neighborhood. One day a wandering cow got into Sterritt's store and managed to impale the flour barrel on her horns. She crashed around to free her head from the barrel, smashing merchandise and dusting everything with flour before they were able to drive her outside.

Sterritt's hogs also enjoyed their freedom, munching on the neighbors' gardens and rutting up lawns. One day Aunt Tiny Smith spied a dozen or more hogs visiting her home below the falls. She locked the animals in her barn and told Sterritt he would have to pay damages. He responded that it was illegal to hold a man's stock, and drove the pigs out of the barn. Aunt Tiny tried to drive them back inside simultaneously, and in the comotion a large boar darted between her legs, upsetting her in the barnyard, long skirts and petticoats flying.

Aunt Tiny was a spinster, Rufus's only sister. She cared for her parents until they died, then farmed the homestead with the help of tenant farmers. Aunt Tiny almost married DeWitt Van Orden, but somehow he got side-tracked and married her niece, Elizabeth Smith, instead. There were two other brothers, John and Franklin, who received land from their parents, in return for providing \$50 per year and firewood, as long as either parent lived.

In addition to the Smiths and the Sterritts in the neighborhood, Aunt Tiny had some odd neighbors called the Gentners. They were an Irish family whose ancestor had settled in this area before the Civil War. The sons, Mike and J'miah lived in the little house alone until they died in the 1920's.

The Gentners always dressed in other people's cast-off clothing and whatever footwear they could find in dumps, usually one boot and one shoe apiece. They never seemed to work much, but kept a little stock and traveled with oxen wherever they went, always together. Four or five times a year they would head south to Saugerties with the oxen and hay-rigging, and on one journey they were spotted by a man organizing a New York City parade. He asked if they would appear in it, and sent a padded horse van to carry the oxen. At the last minute the Gentners decided that they couldn't go, since they didn't have any good clothes, but they were assured that they were wanted exactly as they always looked, and were paid generously for their time.

Once Aunt Tiny noticed Mike and J'miah hanging around her barn and picking something off the ground. She decided to see what they were after, so she hid in the barn and saw that they were collecting old tobacco cuds the hired man had spit out the barn door. They dried the used tobacco and smoked it in their pipes, when they couldn't borrow real tobacco from a neighbor.

*(continued on Page 9)*



Once Uncle Marsh Smith decided not to share his tobacco when they waylaid him along the road, but when the Gentners insisted on giving him a pipeful from their dirty sack of dried cuds. He scoured his pipe out as soon as he got around the next bend in the road, and thereafter decided to share with them.

Neither of the Gentners could read or write, so they got a schoolteacher, Luther Benn, to make out catalog orders and handle their correspondence. Though they lived like paupers and the neighbors wondered how they managed to keep up the taxes, the Gentners died with a small fortune in a New York City bank.

John Smith and William Rand founded a gun powder company in 1860, a most astute business venture in view of the national state of affairs. Their company eventually grew into an important local industry, with several mills along the Cauterskill. Smith and Rand merged with other powder companies, owned by Joseph Bois and a Mr. Laflin. The latter's 1832 mill on Fish Creek, northwest of Saugerties, was probably the first in this area. Serious explosions occurred with frequency, killing three men on one occasion and seven later on. John Merritt was the last man to die there, in an 1864 blast, after which Smith, Bois, Laflin, Rand and all moved their operation to New Jersey.

There is an old cemetery just south of the powder mill boarding house with a number of unmarked graves having rough fieldstones. These apparently are for the men who died in mill explosions. Only one stone carries a name, that of a four-year-old child, a member of the Gardner family who lived across the road.

When Rufus Smith was a boy, he would go to the powder mill for a bucket of brimstone, used by the family for making matches. Dead twigs were dipped in the brimstone, then set to dry before striking. Rufus also visited the boarding house when a music teacher was in residence there.

A powder keg factory near Palenville supplied the necessary containers for the volatile gun powder. In 1865 the mill sold 18,000 kegs of powder for a total of \$85,000, shipping the product via Saugerties.

There were a great many other mills along the creek. Before a man could build a new milldam, he had to secure a mill right, apparently with the consent of those below him on the creek, if their own water supply might be threatened by new construction. Mill rights were valuable and could be sold or deeded with property. In 1830 Tobias Myers advertised for sale the water power and a gristmill at "Myers Falls", seven miles southwest of Catskill on the Cauterskill. This was the millsite owned by Orville Smith around

the turn of the century. Mrs. Elsie Saxe remembers accompanying her father to this mill to have grain ground into animal feed.

Gristmills at High Falls were also operated by Glen Myers and Harvey Snyder, who like Smiths, had milling ancestors. An abandoned gristmill at the verge of the falls was already in ruins by 1850. Willis Davis used the site for his hard wood spoke and handle factory. This burned the night of April 20, 1865, in a fire so hot it melted the machinery. The sawdust piles smouldered for weeks. The road, locally known as "factory hill", was for many years a treacherous stretch, with nowhere to go but straight down in slippery weather. Davis also owned an axe helve factory nearby. In 1855 he employed three men in it, and paid a monthly wage of \$17.

Marvin and Company were making hand tools at a factory above the falls as early as 1818. Augers and chisels can still be found with the mark of "Marvin & Co., Catskill".

Comfort and Rufus Smith built a sawmill below the falls in 1867-68, hiring Christopher Teetsel of Quarryville as boss carpenter. Reuben Towner from Hunter was millwright. A new house was started nearby for the Smiths, but never finished.

According to family legend, when the stone foundation had reached a man's height, a little son in the family fell from the top, hit his head on a rock, and was killed instantly. They abandoned the building project and never returned to finish the house. The foundation hole remains just as it was left that day. A gravestone in Katsbaan churchyard shows that Comfort's daughter, Elizabeth, died at age four, during the years when the mill was constructed, so perhaps she is the child in the story. Rufus also lost a toddler, his son John, but this death occurred later, in the 1880's. Long after the foundation was abandoned, John Ethridge fell into it while fishing along the creek. He escaped by climbing a sapling which had grown inside the cellar hole.

Comfort and Rufus Smith did custom sawing at the mill, and also lumbered their own property. Circular saws were added later and the mill enlarged. They purchased a Green Mountain shingle machine, a wonderful invention. Still later a turning lathe, planer, and matcher for dressed lumber were installed. Eventually the handmade wooden water wheel was discarded and replaced by a metal Rich wheel, then by an Alcott turbine. Comfort's heirs finally sold the mill's remains to T. P. Cowhey around 1900 and Rufus's sons removed the equipment to their nearby farm.

In 1857 a great freshet damaged many mills and bridges along the Cauterskill. The covered bridge at

(continued on Page 10)

## HIGH FALLS *(continued from Page 9)*

High Falls was erected a short time afterward to replace the earlier span; David Van Gelder was the builder. On one occasion Rufus was shingling the bridge roof without a scaffold, lost his foothold, and nearly fell into the deep, rocky gorge below. Fortunately another carpenter on the bridge caught Rufus by his thick head of hair and saved his life.

Another freshet in the spring of 1865 took smaller bridges away again, including a footbridge the Smiths used frequently. They replaced it right away. In 1921 the town took the covered bridge down and erected the present metal structure. At Asbury the covered bridge was replaced in 1908, while the one at Uncle Bob Smith's, near LaRive Restaurant, lasted into the 1920's.

As other forms of power replaced the Cauterskill's abundant water energy, High Falls community went into a decline. Rufus Smith was never the businessman his father had been, preferring artistic pursuits, whether or not they brought in any income. He liked to putter with fine cabinet work; he built the complete interior wood fittings of the stone Episcopal Church in Palenville just because he liked to design cathedrals.

His oldest son, Marshall Smith, liked to run steam engines and had the family love of milling so he operated a gristmill on the farm and also turned out wood implements on his grandfather's lathe. His large collection of steam whistles could be heard for miles, signalling farmers to bring their grain while he had a full head of steam. The boys also played for country dances regularly, including Saturday night parties at the Smith's wagonhouse. When Pete Sterritt was a small boy living at the falls' crossroad, he would watch all the Model T's headed toward the wagonhouse dances.

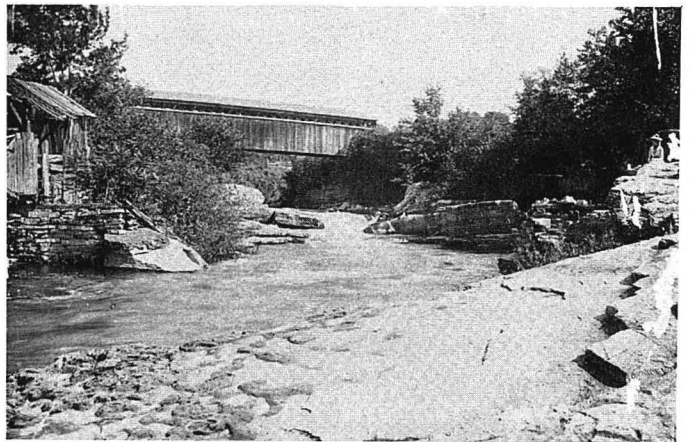
Marsh and the next brother, Wycliffe (called Bob), served in the Spanish-American War. Bob became a sharpshooter in the Philippines, knocking snipers out of the trees. He brought home a cigar box full of teeth as testimony to his marksmanship. Marsh was at San Juan Hill when he contracted malaria and heard the doctor give him up for dead. He survived and lived productively for a number of years, but never fully regained his health. Only Sid, the youngest son, was left to run the home place.

Little by little the Cowhey family bought up parcels of land around High Falls until they owned everything, including church and schoolhouse. The latter became a community hall. Mr. Cowhey was from New York, but his wife had been a Burke from Mossy Hill. Their three daughters, around the turn of the century, sometimes attended school at High Falls.

In later years the sisters established camps on the property, affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church. They provided many summer jobs for local people.

As the three Cowhey sisters got older and there was less money available, they still continued to buy all the property they could. After a while it was hard to keep up with the taxes, and the camps went downhill. Toward the end the ladies were still driving Cadillacs, but borrowing money from the help. When all three died without heirs, the land was auctioned to pay back taxes. The buildings were abandoned and fell into ruin, until Ms. Sylvia Samuels purchased the entire property a few years ago. She has since refurbished some parcels and sold others. One family purchased the schoolhouse and had it converted into a summer home.

Hattie Myers, at 94, is the only remaining life-time resident of High Falls.



*David Van Gelder's Bridge*

□ □ □ □ □

## PREHISTORIC HOMICIDE *(continued from Page 1)*

Some centuries after his burial where he was slain, a maple tree sent out deep roots which gradually wrapped themselves around the skeleton until Robert LeFurgy decided to put up a fence in 1931. It may well be termed one of Coxsackie's prehistoric homicides.

*—Editor's Note: Daniel Monahan, now living at 115 South River Street, has provided the background material for this article.*

□ □ □ □ □

Greene County Historical Society  
Raymond Beecher, Editor  
R. D.  
COXSACKIE, NEW YORK 12051

NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U. S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
CATSKILL, N. Y. 12414  
PERMIT NO. 91