

5/11/52
10/27/52



144-YEAR-OLD HOME WEARS YEARS GRACEFULLY

A busy tavern in the days of the War of 1812 and visited regularly during the stage coach days, this home has been little changed during the years that have followed. It stands at the corner of the Stone Road and Lockport Cambria Town Line at Warren's Corners. (US&J Photo)

Former Tavern Keeper Gave Name To Warren's Corners

This is one of a series of articles prepared from information collected by Niagara County Historian Clarence O. Lewis, contrasting the early days of the area with those of the present.

Wolves and snakes were added to other hardships in the early days when a home, still standing on the southwest corner at the junction of the Stone Road and the Lockport Cambria Town Line at Warren's Corners was built.

The house, now occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Yousey, was built about 1808 by John Forsyth. County Historian Clarence O. Lewis today describes its unique history as follows:

"In 1805, John Forsyth with his wife and two children started from near Batavia, their destination being what is now Warren's Corners.

"Mrs. Forsyth and the children were on the one horse they possessed. An ox sled containing all

their household possessions and a good stock of food came next, followed by a cow, some pigs and a few sheep. John Forsyth walked behind to see that neither his family nor the domestic animals wandered from the Lewiston Trail which they were following.

"They saw only three of four settlers on the whole trip. John just drove his stake in the land, as was customary at that time, and built a log cabin and a log shelter for the animals, to protect them from the elements, but more especially to keep the wolves and bears from killing them. With all these precautions, however, wolves killed all the sheep.

"The nearest neighbor to the East along the Ridge was, at what then was called Morehouse Corners, now Harland Corners. Eleven miles of wilderness with only an Indian trail traversing it lay between the two places. The swamps north of their cabin in what is now the Town of Wilson was full

of wolves and Mrs. Forsyth often related in after years what a terrific howling they made at night.

"Their nearest neighbor to the West was Joseph Hewitt at Howell's Creek where shortly after was built Howell's Tavern, described last week.

"In 1808, the Ridge Road was surveyed and the prospects of the junction of the two roads becoming an important place, John Forsyth built a frame tavern which still stands today with only a few alterations over the years.

"Beaver dams had obstructed the normal flow of the creeks to the lake and swamps were to be found in every direction, but more especially to the North and East.

"The tavern did a thriving business particularly during the War of 1812 and thereafter, with a slight interruption after the British, Indian Raid of Dec. 19, 1813, which drove practically all the settlers out of the western half of the county. Beginning in 1816, stage coaches made regular stops at this tavern. The aperture through which the mail was pushed is still to be seen.

"John Forsyth was not destined to see his tavern become such an important place. He died on June 2, 1812, just before the war started.

"Ezra Warren, a sergeant in the Regular Army along the Niagara Frontier, was stationed with two other soldiers at the tavern to watch for deserters and stragglers. He and the Widow Forsyth fell in love and, after he was discharged late in 1813, he returned and they were married.



EZRA WARREN

"The corners was thereafter called Warren's Corners. Many old residents think that it should have been called Forsyth Corners, since John Forsyth was the first settler in the vicinity.

"During the general flight of the settlers in December, 1813, Mrs. Forsyth sent two of her children to her brother's tavern, east of Batavia, and remained with the other two at the tavern, trusting that the British and Indians would not get that far from Ft. Niagara and that she would have ample warning if they should.

"In an interview with Historian Orsamus Turner in 1849, she tells of the hardships which beset them constantly in the early days. She related that the most terrifying experience was, when after being outside one day, she returned to the cabin and found a rattlesnake coiled up beside her child, who was asleep on the floor. She had enough presence of mind to grab an ax and cut off its head. Snakes

were so plentiful that Mr. Warren for his stock, had to borrow a pair of leather boots to protect him from snake bites.

"In 1825, the Great Temperance Movement which reached its peak about 1840 had started and preachers of all denominations were telling of the evils of liquor drinking. At the old wooden Methodist Church at Warren's Corners, in 1825, an evangelist preached on this and kindred subjects. Mr. Warren was converted and, as he afterwards stated 'Baptised by the Holy Spirit.'

"The legend prevails at the Corners that he dreamed the Lord directed him to cease selling liquor and begin preaching the Gospel and the evils of intemperance. At any event, the next morning he rolled all the barrels and kegs of liquor out of the tavern and down the hill at the rear. With his ax he broke them open and the yard was flooded with whiskey, brandy and brandied cherries.

"As was the custom in those days, domestic animals were not confined by fences but ran at large (even in the village streets here in Lockport). Each animal had a mark of some kind which was registered with the town clerk. All the hogs around Warren's Corners were to be found near the tavern looking for scraps of food.

"When Ezra drained the liquor barrels many of the neighbors' hogs were there and proceeded to eat the cherries and lap up the liquor. Soon they began to wobble, then as they continued to imbibe, they lay down in a stupor. Ezra had to notify the neighbors to come and get their hogs with 'mud boats.'

"Ezra Warren thereafter traveled from place to place preaching the word of God and the evils of intemperance. He never became an ordained minister, because he refused to be baptised, but he undoubtedly had a tremendous influence in aiding the Temperance Movement. He afterwards was called 'Father Warren.' He died in 1879 in the 90th year of his life.

"Mrs. Warren had died in 1857. She was the mother of 12 children, six by Ezra Warren. The only one of their direct descendants still living is Warren Tumber of Newfane.

"The original 'patent' from the Holland Land Company to John Forsyth is in the possession of someone in the county; I have not been able to locate it as yet.

"A small family cemetery not far from the house contains graves of John Forsyth, Mr. and Mrs. Ezra Warren and a generation or two of their descendants.

"DeWitt Clinton and his fellow commissioner who were, in 1810, looking for the most practical route for the canal, dined at the tavern. Mr. Clinton became governor of New York State later.

Along the Ridge Road and Lockport-Olcott Road, where the stages ran regularly many of the former inns and taverns still are standing, although not used as such now. Others in Lockport which catered to the packet boat trade on the canal are also still remaining. These too have been put to other use.

After the famous Lockport House on the corner of Exchange Street burned in 1841 the hotel was moved to the Exchange Block on Market Street. The building

Niagara Frontier Folks Suffered In War Of 1812

By CLARENCE O. LEWIS

Niagara County Historian

This year of 1964 is fast drawing to a close. One Hundred Fifty years ago, the unpopular and inconclusive and for Niagara County—the devastating War of 1812 was likewise in its last stages. A Treaty of Peace was to be signed at Ghent, Belgium on Dec. 24, 1814.

The Niagara Frontier was the scene of more suffering during that war than any other section of the country. More soldiers were assembled and more battles fought along the Niagara River than anywhere else on the Canadian boundary.

When war was declared on June 18, 1812, the military commanders on our frontier received no notice thereof until June 26, whereas the British were notified on the 24. On the 27 they attacked and captured an American vessel near Buffalo to the amazement of the soldiers stationed there.

Another strange event of this unusual War occurred when Sir George Prevost, early in August 1812, suggested to Gen. Dearborn, the American Commander that inasmuch as the English Parliament had rescinded the orders to search American vessels for British sailors that an armistice be ordered. This rescinding of the humiliating order could have ended the war because the impression of sailors from American ships was the most important reason given for the declaration of war.

However Pres. Madison and his advisers with the expectation of annexing Canada to the U.S. did not wish to end the war at that time. Thus Gen. Dearborn was ordered to end the armistice and instruct Gen. Van Rensselaer to attack Queenston.

THE NIAGARA FRONTIER was entirely unprepared for War. Fort Niagara was badly in need of repairs; the garrison was small. To the south of the fort only 600 soldiers were available to defend the frontier.

Eventually a force of five or six hundred regulars and some 2,500 militia assembled at Lewiston. The militia were armed with any type of guns they could procure many of Revolutionary War vintage. Gen. Van Rensselaer, a political appointee with no military experience was the commander.

After his defeat at the Battle of Queenston, he resigned his command. The reasons for his defeat were almost unbelievable. During the night of Oct. 12, 1812, 13 boats, each with a capacity of 50 men were waiting below the Ferry House at Lewiston to convey about 3,000 men across the river

All summer military carpenters had been building boats in preparation for this invasion. Forty were anchored at Four Mile Creek Harbor and nearly as many more at Fort Schlosser but only the 13 were at the ferry that night and as the embarkation was about to start it was discovered that the boats contained no oars.

The attack was postponed to Oct. 13 but still only the 13 boats were there. Not more than 800 soldiers were able to cross. When Gen. Van Rensselaer realized his troops must have large reinforcements, he sent a messenger to Niagara Falls with an order for more boats. By the time they were half way to Lewiston the battle was over. Even had they been available it would have been of no help because the 2,500 Militia after seeing boat loads of wounded and dying men came back to Lewiston, lost all their battle ardor and refused to leave the U.S. for foreign soil. With not over 10 boats left available and the battle about won by the English they perhaps have been unduly criticized.

A SITUATION probably never before paralleled developed in 1814 along our frontier. The English occupied Fort Niagara and the greater part of the Niagara County Frontier from Dec. 19, 1813 until the end of the war.

The American Army had captured Fort George across the river June 1813, but evacuated it on Dec. 13, 1813 because of too small a garrison to defend it. However by July 3, 1814 a sizable American Army was gradually gaining control of most of the Canadian frontier from Fort Erie northward.

When Gen. McClure decided his garrison in Fort George was too small to defend it from a large force of

English approaching, he ordered the Village of Newark (now Niagara on the Lake) burned. This was on Dec. 13, 1813 when snow and cold enveloped the area.

Only two hours notice was given the residents. After this cruel and unnecessary act he abandoned the fort.

On Dec. 19 the English and their Indian allies crossed the river at Five Mile Meadows, captured Fort Niagara and looted and burned all buildings along the river to the Tonawanda Creek. Another party pursued the refugees along the Ridge Road, looting and burning the houses and barns as far as the junction of the present Church Street and the Ridge Road.

A FEW DAYS LATER a company of English soldiers from Fort Niagara proceeded along the Lake Road, looting and burning the settlers homes. Their chief objective, however, was Van Horn's Grist Mill on the 18 Mile Creek at what is now Burt. This mill had been supplying flour to the American troops on the frontier.

In most cases the settlers had little advance notice of the raid and thus were able to carry with them only a very few of their valuables. In some cases they placed table silver, etc. in bags and dropped them in their wells or hid them in the surrounding woods. Practically every one of the inhabitants fled eastward.

Some idea of this precipitous flight may be gained from the words of a petition sent to Albany by a committee set up in Canandaigua for the "Relief and safety of the refugees."

"Our roads are filled with people many of whom have been reduced from a state of competency and good prospects to the last degree of want and sorrow. The fugitives from Niagara County especially were dispersed under circumstances of so much terror that in some cases families are separated. Niagara and part of Genesee which lies west of Batavia are completely depopulated. All the settle-

ments in a section of country 40 miles square and which contained more than 12,000 souls are effectually broken up."

A few men remained secluded in the woods back from the river and a military camp with a capacity constructed at Hardscrabble, for 1,500 to 2,000 soldiers was a short distance east of the present Dickersonville Road. For the greater part of 1814 that was the nearest American Military Camp to the Niagara River.

On July 7, 1814 the English and Indians burned the Hardscrabble barracks. The details of this and the exact spot where these barracks were located seem to be nowhere available. The Hardscrabble Barracks must have been rebuilt because we read of events taking place there after the burning.

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Country Was Wilderness During The War Of 1812

By CLARENCE O. LEWIS
Niagara County Historian

Inasmuch as this year of 1964 is the Sesqui-centennial anniversary of the last year of the War of 1812 it might be an appropriate time to look back and visualize the general appearance of Niagara County at that time and consider briefly the pioneer settlers in those war years who were so tragically driven from their homes by the English and their Indian allies.

Niagara County had been created by an act of the Legislature March 11, 1808. This area had been a part of Genesee County from 1802 to 1808 and it included what is now Erie County. Buffalo was the county seat from 1808 to 1821 when Erie County was created. The Niagara County seat was, then by the reorganization Act of the Legislature, temporarily located at Lewiston.

LOOKING BACK to 1810 when the first census of Niagara County was taken, we learn that the population of the area between Lake Ontario and the Cattaraugus Creek (the Niagara County of that date) was 4,562. It is interesting to note that eight of them were slaves. The Town of Cambria which then comprehended all of Niagara County north of the Tonawanda Creek or its present area had 248 families or approximately 1,450 people, the most of whom lived in log cabins.

There were only three access routes to and through the county. The least strenuous route was by boats along the south shore of Lake Ontario. Many of our early settlers along the lake front came from both the east and the west by that water route.

Those coming by boat from the west were families who had previously invested in the cheaper land in Canada. However, when rumors of war became ominous and it was learned that they would have to swear allegiance to the King of England they moved by boat to lands purchased from the Holland Land Company along the Ontario lake front in Niagara County.

In 1811 a road paralleling the lake shore had been constructed from Fort Niagara eastward to the Eighteen Mile creek and south to Van Horn's Grist Mill at what is now Burt. This mill supplied the fort with flour.

The first land access route into central Niagara County from the east was the "Niagara Road" so designated on old maps. We now call it the Lewiston Road, Chestnut Ridge, Cold Springs Road, Old Niagara Road and Stone Road to Warren's Corners and Ridge Road to Lewis

This route, first an Indian trail, was improved by the Holland Land Co. shortly after 1800, so that settlers in their ox carts could reach the central portions of Niagara County. On both sides of this road as late as the war years 1812-1814 lay most of the cleared land. To the north and to the south were vast areas of forest.

This road had been for countless centuries an Indian trail stretching from the Hudson River at the confluence of the Mohawk River westward to the Niagara. The French priests in the last half of the seventeenth century were the first white men to traverse this road.

After the defeat of the French in 1759 and the occupation of the Niagara Frontier by the English, this Indian trail, later the Niagara Road, was the only direct land route between the Niagara Frontier and the English colonies in the eastern part of the state.

WHEN THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR began the whole Mohawk Indian Nation, allies of the English, were compelled to leave their ancestral abode in the Mohawk Valley. They migrated by this Indian Trail to the Niagara Frontier which was occupied by the English.

Strangely enough, they carried with them a large church bell and a silver communion set presented to them by Queen Anne of England during her reign.

They built their new log cabin homes along both sides of the present Ridge Road from where today the R. W. and O Railroad tracks cross the Ridge westward to what was then called the "East Landing" now the village of Lewiston. Their chief, Joseph Brant, built his cabin near a spring at the base of the escarpment near what is now the corner of Hillside Drive and the Creek Road.

There is a perpetual right-of-way two feet wide to that spring and a triangular reserved area around this "Brant's Spring." A small stream still runs from this spring down to Hillside Drive.

Not far from his cabin, Chief Joseph Brant built a log church wherein was used Queen Anne's silver communion set of the Church of England. The bell was hung on a horizontal pole between two crotches of an old apple tree. A hardwood clapper, welded by hand called the Mohawks to service on Sundays.

FREQUENTLY THE CHAPLAIN from Fort Niagara occupied the pulpit. Despite this apparent religious fervor of the Mohawks, Chief Joseph Brant and his warriors together with Butler's Rangers, most of whom were Tories made frequent raids on the border settlements in the east, looting and burning.

Settlers who were unable to travel were killed and scalped. Six to eight dollars were paid by the English at Fort Niagara for scalps. The young men and women were brought as captives to the Fort. Before the Indians transferred them to the English they were compelled to "run the gauntlet."

Along this same trail in 1777-78 thousands of Tories were forced to leave their homes in the colonies and seek the protection of the English on our frontier. In that winter it is related that campfires along the trail burned almost continually so the next party would find the fire burning or at least live embers for a new fire.

In 1812 after war had been declared a party of soldiers from Batavia en route to the Niagara Frontier stopped at Cold Spring for a short rest. It was an unusually hot day and they indulged freely in the cold spring water and just as freely in the whiskey sold there at the Charles Wilbur tavern.

Twelve of them died rather suddenly from causes never definitely determined. They were buried on the hill to the right of the main gate to the present Cold Spring Cemetery.

THE SECOND ACCESS to central Niagara County was the Ridge Road; formerly an Indian trail from the east to about where the Checkered Tavern Road is now located, then branching off to the southwest, joined the Niagara Trail near Cold Spring. The reason for this changing from the Ridge was because the area between what is now Wrights Corners and Warrens Corners was a great swamp and practically impassable except when frozen over.

When in the early war years General Dearborn, secretary of war, wanted to transfer cannon from the Gaines Arsenal to our frontier, he had a "log causeway" or corduroy road built through this swamp. The next spring many of the logs washed away. By 1816, however, a permanent road sufficiently passable for stage coaches was built.

The greatest tragedy to take place on this road was on Dec. 19, 1813 when hundreds of frightened fugitives from the English and Indian raid on the Frontier were fleeing eastward.

By 1814 the last year of the war, Niagara County

was nearly depopulated of its pioneer settlers. Only soldiers were to be seen in any numbers, and these were largely concentrated in barracks at Hardscrabble where now is Dickersonville.

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Fort Niagara Garrison Slaughtered In 1813

UNION-SUN WEEK-END JOURNAL

LOCKPORT, N. Y., SATURDAY, MARCH 15, 1958

The ill-fated burning of New-
 ert across the Niagara River
 from Youngstown was described
 in last week's article. The average
 taken by the English, beginning
 six days later, Dec. 24, 1812 was
 out of all proportion to the stre-
 cution in which so lives were lost.
 Brandy, it followed this pattern:
 In the early morning of Dec.
 24 a large force of English and
 Indian allies crossed the River at
 Five Mile Meadows between
 Youngstown and Lewiston. The
 force divided, one detachment pro-
 ceeding toward Youngstown, the
 other waiting for a signal that Fort
 Niagara was captured before at-
 tacking Lewiston.

The surprise and capture of the
 deserted outpost and the amazing
 fact that the gate to the fort was
 found partly open enabled the
 British to complete the occupation
 of the fort in a very short time.
 They were easily rickshes and
 bayoneted a large proportion of
 the defenders, even to the sick
 and wounded.

BUILDINGS BURNED

When the English work was
 completed they fired a cannon
 and the force waiting at Five Mile
 Meadows started their march on
 Lewiston, a village then of about
 a dozen houses and a number of
 other buildings. The women, the
 war trophies of the Indians were
 heard the women and children
 were huddled out into fields. If

available, and otherwise they fed
 on food, mostly eastward along
 the Ridge Road. The men fol-
 lowed except those that, uninter-
 ested, long and were killed and
 scalped.

Every building save one was
 burned. Then with only a brief re-
 sistance by the few soldiers re-
 mained at Fort Gray on Lewiston
 Heights, the British marched up
 the river and looted and burned
 everything. The inhabitants there
 had plenty of time to escape and
 so casualties were reported.

GRIST MILL BURNED

A small detachment from the
 captured Fort Niagara marched
 along the Lake Road to the
 Robinsons Mill Creek and up that
 stream to Van Horst's Grist Mill.
 Burning nearly every house and
 out-building on the way, including
 the mill. Part of the
 forces followed the fleeing settlers

eastward on the Ridge as far as
 Church St. The larger portion of
 the inhabitants of Niagara County
 moved further inland.

SUPPLIES SACKED

Black Rock and Buffalo suffered
 the same fate on Dec. 29 and 30.
 Thus did the English take their
 revenge for the burning of New-
 ark, and thus was another chapter
 of American military inefficiency
 and superstitious whimsy.

In capturing Fort Niagara the
 English found a large supply of
 food, clothing, ammunition, etc. I
 have before me the original in-
 ventories of Amherst received at
 the Fort in 1812 prior to its
 capture. They were handed to me
 by S. Grove McClellan, executive
 vice president of the Old Fort
 Niagara Assn. The paper is in
 good condition, the ink has faded
 some but the miserable writing
 makes them hard to read. There
 are 22 articles such as clothing,
 shoes, belts, caps, op-shellets and
 cockades.

ALL IN CASES

One strange thing to us of to-
 day is the fact that every item
 received at the fort and mentioned
 in these inventories came packed
 in cases. A few items listed will
 illustrate the immense supplies
 captured by the English. 1,522
 coats; 2,535 pairs of linen pants;
 4,827 pairs of shoes; 3,715 shirts;
 2,480 stockings; 500 cockades and
 eagles; 50 plumes; 1,200 wigs but-
 tons. These items are selected
 from some 40 or more listed. Such
 items as 40 barrels of flour supply
 the amount of food supplies cap-
 tured.

GRAND ISLAND SWITCHED

By the end of December 1814
 both sides seemed willing to end
 the war with the status quo ex-
 cept as it was when war was de-
 clared with the exception of the
 Niagara River boundary being in-
 terchanged and picking Grand
 Island on the American side.

Peace was declared on Dec. 24,
 1814 yet General Andrew Jackson
 at New Orleans and the beset-
 ting English force not having been
 notified fought the Battle of New
 Orleans on Jan. 8, 1815. General
 Jackson's brilliant victory won for
 him great acclaim and in 1823 the
 presidency of the United States.

PECULIAR SITUATION

As stated in the first article on
 this subject, the War of 1812 was
 the most unique, unpopu- lar, un-
 necessary, and most inconven-
 ient of the United States. Besides the
 examples already related, we find
 in 1817 this peculiar situation —
 the Americans occupying Fort
 Erie and most of the Canadian
 Frontier and the English holding
 Fort Niagara until the end of the
 war. At this period if the War
 Dept. had sent reinforcements the
 British forces could easily have
 been defeated but instead of fol-
 lowing up the victories, the Amer-
 icans evacuated Fort Erie and
 Fort George, thus giving up all
 they had gained.

SUPPLIES BUILT UP

It is interesting to note also that
 in the last year of the war, 500
 troops were stationed on the Ridge
 Road at Hardscrabble (later
 named Dickersonville) also there
 was a log building containing 500
 guns, a quantity of ammunition
 and four wagon loads of entrench-
 ing tools. There was also a depot
 of provisions on the Ridge Road
 at Warrens Corners. It consisted
 of beef, pork, tallow and flour
 all of which there was a large
 supply.

All of this indicates that when
 the war was almost over the War
 Department made those prepara-
 tions which should have been
 made before the war was de-
 clared. Also, strange to say, when
 the fortunes of war were greatly
 in our favor we signed the Peace
 Treaty of Ghent with practically
 no gain whatever. As it turned out
 it probably was fortunate we did
 not retain any Canadian soil, since
 it would have been a source of
 future friction and controversy
 between the two nations. As it is,
 since the end of the War of 1812
 and the Rush Bagot Treaty of
 1817, perfect harmony has existed
 between the two countries and the
 borders of neither country have
 been guarded by military units.

Next week's article will be de-
 voted to peaceful pursuits. The
 beginning of reading clubs, and
 circulating libraries in Niagara
 County will be traced as the con-
 tribution of this office to National
 Library Week.

Indians Paid By British To Return Cows, Horses

By CLARENCE O. LEWIS

Since my article of Dec. 27 on the Military Camp at Hardscrabble (Dickersonville) during the War of 1812, several references to this camp found in Canadian histories of the war have been called to my attention by I. Richard Reed, a Niagara Falls historian.

One of those references is a military report dated July 7, 1814 from an English officer to his superior. He states, "I have the honor to acquaint your excellency that about 150 Western Indians and about the same number of our soldiers under Capt. Caldwell and Elliott crossed over the river last week at Niagara (on the Lake) for the purpose of ascertaining in which direction the enemy (Americans) went he broke up from Buffalo and on this service they burned the barracks at Hardscrabble about five or six miles from Lewiston. The barracks were capable of accommodating from 1,500 to 2,000 men.

"They returned without committing the smallest act of personal violence to any individual but the Indians confiscated some horses, cattle, hogs and sheep and private property. I thought it proper to induce them to leave these behind which they did with great reluctance and dissatisfaction and in remuneration for this forbearance I have deemed it advisable to give directions that \$30 should be paid the Indians for the horses and \$20 each for the cattle."

This was an unusual kindness to the few settlers along the ridge who had returned after the raid of Dec. 19, 1813 and rebuilt their homes.

AT THE DATE of this report July 7, 1814, practically all of Niagara County Frontier was dominated by the English. These barracks at Hardscrabble as per my article of Dec. 27 were enlarged and reinforced by troops from Batavia in Jan. 1814 and here was the only spot within Niagara County's present boundaries in possession of American troops.

Apparently they were driven out in July 1814 and the strange paradox I mentioned in the last article, that of the Americans controlling a large part of the Canadian

Frontier and the British a large part of the American Frontier became more astonishing.

In April 1814 an American soldier, a member of our Frontier forces defected to the English station at York (Toronto). He reported that the only sites on the American side of the Niagara River were as follows:

"The troops on that line totaled 7,000 men, the 25th Regiment of 500 men stationed at Hardscrabble, 100 men at Black Rock, and 6,400 men at Eleven Mile Creek (Ellicott Creek, about a mile south of Williamsville).

"On the Ridge Road at Hardscrabble there is an arsenal, a log building containing 500 stands of arms deposited by the militia who were all dismissed on the 11th of April 1814. There is also there a quantity of ammunition and four wagon loads of entrenching tools. There are no field pieces.

"There is a depot of provisions on the Ridge Road at the Widow Forsythe's (Warren's Corners). It consists of beef, pork, whiskey and flour of all of which there is a large supply. There is a road leading from the mouth of 18-Mile Creek on the west side. The distance is 10 miles but the road is very bad. He thinks there is at least 2,000 barrels of provisions at this depot."

This last statement is rather puzzling to us and presents another challenge.

IT WAS IN THE FALL of 1814 after the burning of the Hardscrabble barracks that one of the English Indians started out on his own after some "firewater." He went into the tavern of Spatrow Sage who with his wife had just returned and set up business again. Mr. Sage was some distance away cutting wood.

A young woman friend and Mrs. Sage were in the tavern alone. The Indian asked for a drink but Mrs. Sage, knowing the effects of liquor on the Indians, refused. He thereupon helped himself to liquor and under its influence grabbed Mrs. Sage and ordering the young woman companion to follow, started through a ravine leading to the north.

The young woman finally escaped and hurried back to where Mr. Sage was chopping wood. With only his axe as a weapon he followed the tracks of the Indian and Mrs. Sage in the light snow. Finally approaching quite closely, before the Indian heard him, Mr. Sage dealt the Indian a terrific blow with his axe.

Thus he rescued his wife and they returned safely to the tavern. After that until the War was over he never was far away from the tavern.

Which of the four corners at the present Dickersonville was the site of this Hardscrabble Camp we have not yet ascertained. Harry Haven of Lewiston in contacting the residents of the Hardscrabble area, particularly elderly men of the neighborhood. Richard Reed of Niagara Falls and myself are searching for documentary evidence.

MR. MOSS, who owns the land near where Alexander Dickerson's tavern was located, has found several American coins dated 1812 but nothing else of significance. His abstract of title shows no transfer of land to the War Department. In the spring if we have not located it by that time Mr. Haven

will dig test holes at likely spots on all four corners. In the meantime he is checking the abstracts of title on the other three corners.

From the more elevated lay of the land on the southeast corner he thinks that the barracks might have been there but has no proof as yet. The Methodist Church now occupies that corner.

During the past week our office has been fortunate in securing through the help of the County Clerk's office, copies of the Holland Land Company maps showing the names and locations of the first settlers who purchased land from the Holland Land Co. The Lewiston map shows that the first owner of the Hardscrabble lot where Mr. Moss now lives was Aaron Childs and the next one west was Col. Alexander Dickerson; later Col. Dickerson bought the corner lot of Mr. Childs.

The southwest corner which we thought might have been unsuited for a military camp, now in view of the Holland Land Co. maps, appears to be a possibility, after all. It is in Range 8, Township 14 and Lot 61, and is adjacent to the northeast corner of the Tuscarora Indian Reservation. This part of the reservation was purchased from the Holland Land Co. in 1804 for the Indians by Henry Dearborn, Secretary of War with the money from the lease or sale of their North Carolina lands. This lot 61 as late as 1851 is shown on the map as vacant. More research may locate the Military Camp on that lot.

1/11/62
17

Early Tavern Keeper Preached On Temperance

By CLARENCE O. LEWIS

At the end of last weeks tour we were at Warrens Corners in front of the tavern built by John Forsythe in 1810, according to family tradition. It had the reputation of being the finest tavern along the Ridge Road and naturally was well patronized.

When the War of 1812 began three soldiers from the Frontier forces were stationed at the Forsyths Tavern to watch for deserters and stragglers and see that the many companies of militia on their way to the Frontier did not become too boisterous in or around the tavern. One of these soldiers was Sgt. Ezra Warren.

On June 2, 1812, John Forsythe died but his widow continued to operate the tavern. On Dec. 19, 1813 when nearly all the settlers fled from the county Mrs. Forsythe refused to leave the tavern. As it happened the raiding party did not get that far. The records of that period do not so state but presumably Sgt. Warren and his two companions remained also. The Sargeant had already fallen in love with the widow Forsythe and became fond of her three children so it is very unlikely he deserted her. After the war was over and he was discharged he married the widow and took over the management of the tavern.

BEGINNING IN 1816 the stage coaches stopped there and one day a young man alighted from the stage and told Ezra Warren he had no more money and therefore could go no further on the stage. Mr. Warren employed him for a month or more and then he went on to Lewiston where he taught school, served as tax collector and by 1825 was so well known and so popular that he was elected sheriff of Niagara County. His name was Eli Bruce and the story of the remaining seven years of his short life is a sad one, and too long to relate here, although I may say it was of national significance.

We are more concerned with Ezra Warren at present. Like most taverns Ezra kept a large stock of wine and liquors on hand. The many barrels of whiskey and brandy were stored in his basement which due to the slope of the land opened on the rear into a sort of low swale. Ezra's conscience had never bothered in the least about selling liquor. Tavern keepers were

popular and greatly respected in most cases.

About this year of 1825, however, there was started more or less simultaneously all over the east a great temperance movement. One night in 1825 a Temperance lecturer came to the Methodist Church at Warrens Corners. He dwelt on the evils resulting from the habit of drinking liquor and even went so far as to paint a verbal picture of tavernkeepers sizzling in the lower regions.

All this made a deep impression on Ezra Warren. During the night he dreamed that the Lord appeared before him and commanded him to cease selling liquor and to begin preaching the gospel and the evils of intemperance. Bright and early the next morning Ezra went to the basement with axe in hand: Opening the basement door he rolled barrel after barrel of whiskey and cherry brandy out into the gully. When the very last barrel was out he began knocking in the heads of the barrels and soon there were great pools of whiskey and cherry brandy with the cherries floating around in it.

NOW LIKE ALL TAVERNS along the Ridge, meals were served here to the weary travelers who arrived by stage-coach, on horseback or whole families in a covered wagon.

The scraps of food from the table were thrown out the rear kitchen window into the swale. The only garbage collectors in those days were hogs which by law were at that time "Free commoners" which meant they were allowed to run at large.

Naturally all hogs anywhere near Warrens Corners came to the rear of Ezra Warren's Tavern for the tidbits tossed out the windows. On this particular morning when Ezra was obeying the command of the Lord and spilling out all his liquor the usual number of hogs were on hand. At first they sniffed the brandy, then ate the cherries. A real treat this time they must have thought. Next they began to drink the brandy and whiskey from the pools. At first Ezra paid no attention to them. Soon however they began to wobble from side to side and Ezra wondered at first if they were sick.

After the hogs had imbibed still more of the liquor they began one by one to drop over on their sides and stay there. At first Ezra was quite

alarmed and then he realized the hogs were drunk, to use the vernacular of later days, they were "dead drunk."

Whether or not he realized that here before his very eyes was a concrete example of the evils of drinking liquor we are not informed. However he did realize that he had a problem on his hands. In those days every owner of domestic animals that were "free commanders" had to have one ear of each animal perforated or slit with his own "earmark." These were of many different shapes and were registered with the Town Clerk in what was designated "The Book of Strays."

Ezra recognized the "earmarks" of the drunken hogs and since they showed no signs of "sobering up" he sent a messenger around to the different owners to tell them to come with mud boats and oxen or horses and pick up their hogs. No doubt if the pools of brandy and whiskey had not soaked into the ground some of the owners of the hogs would have followed their example.

At any rate I have no doubt they chided Ezra for not inviting them to help dispose of the liquor. Ezra Warren thereafter sold no more liquor and spent much of his time traveling from place to place lecturing on the evils of intemperance.

THIS IS A TRUE STORY handed down from generation to generation in the Warren family, and first told to me in 1952 by a grandson. It was published in the Union Sun and Journal Aug. 11, 1952 under my name and I was amazed a week later when I was informed by the Union-Sun staff that the Associated Press had published a condensed version of the story all over the country.

At Warrens Corners is the old school house where the Seven Sutherland Sisters and their brother, Charles, attended. Here also on the angle between the Stone and Ridge Roads is the Methodist Church where each Sunday they thrilled the congregation with their beautiful rendition of the hymns.

The very first school in the Town of Lockport was a frame building 18 x 24 in size built in 1814 on land donated by Ezra Warren. Amanda Rice, later Mrs. Joash Taylor, was the first school teacher.

A plank road from Lockport, operated by the "Lockport and Warrens Corners Plank Road Co." from 1850 to 1902, traversed the present Stone Road from the foot of Rattlesnake Hill. Many times I drove through the toll gate at that point. In our files is a picture of this toll gate taken around 1900.

Before leaving Warrens Corners some of us might wish to pull off the Ridge onto the short piece of road running in front of the old tavern, now the attractive home of Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Yousey Near the barn and west of the house a short distance, is the old Forsythe, Warren burying grounds, where John Forsythe with his six children and Ezra Warren among his six and Mrs. Mary Ganson Forsythe Warren, mother of the 12 children all sleep peacefully in this secluded family plot.

12/3/62

12/13/62

1813 Invasion By British, Indians Caused Agonizing Hardships On Niagara Frontier

By CLARENCE O. LEWIS
Niagara County Historian

After the Revolutionary War ended land speculators turned their eyes toward western New York. Immediately Massachusetts and New York, both of which states held Royal Colonial Grants extending indefinitely westward, entered into litigation to determine which state owned it.

In 1786 Massachusetts was given the right to sell the land subject to the Indians' title which was recognized as the first claim of ownership. New York was allotted the Sovereignty and a "Mile Reserve" along the Niagara River.

Robert Morris eventually purchased three and one-half million acres from Massachusetts at one and one-half shillings per acre. Morris bought other lands, but this is the land in Western New York that he sold to the Holland Land Company in which we are interested.

This Holland Land Co. was composed of nine capitalists in Amsterdam, Holland, who were looking for profitable investments in this new United States of America.

THEY SENT AN AGENT across the Atlantic to report on land investments. He recommended western New York land.

Robert Morris having partially financed the Revolution was badly in need of money. The two parties soon came to terms and the Holland Land Co. through agents purchased from Robert Morris three and one-half million acres west of the Genesee River.

He agreed to extinguish the Indian Title which he succeeded in doing at a great Treaty meeting at Big Tree near Genesee in September 1797.

The Holland Land Co.

appointed Joseph Ellicott to supervise the survey of this vast tract into Ranges, Townships and lots. By 1880 they were ready to start selling land and so advertised.

At the same times they were improving the Lewiston Trail so that prospective settlers could get through with their covered ox-drawn wagons.

The experience of John and Mary Forsyth in 1807 is typical of many others. They started from near LeRoy in a covered wagon drawn by oxen. Mary guided the oxen. The family cow was tied to the rear of the wagon. A small coop with half a dozen chickens

was fastened to one side of the wagon, a plough on the other side. Behind the cow were three or four sheep and about the same number of hogs.

John Forsyth followed on horseback. Progress was very slow.

It took the Forsyths five or six days to make the tip to Warren's Corners. Tree stumps in the road had to be dodged or straddled by the high wheels and axles of the wagon.

IN 1813 THE AMERICAN FORCES had captured Fort George in Canada and Capt. McClure was left in command. Later learning that the English were about to try to recapture the Fort, he decided to withdraw the Garrison to Fort Niagara.

Before leaving on Dec. 13, 1813 he caused the approximately 100 houses in the village of Newark to be burned. He had given the inhabitants only a two-hour notice. There was nearly a foot of snow on the ground and even the Americans were angry at this cruel act. The English retaliated on Dec. 19 when they sent a force of 500 soldiers and Indians across the River at Five Mille Meadows.

This force divided there, half going down to Fort Niagara, where they had little difficulty in capturing it. As soon as a cannon was fired to signal its capture the remainder of the force at Five Mile Meadows started for Lewiston arriving there just before daybreak. The alarm had been given the inhabitants a scant half hour before the raiders arrived and most of them had fled eastward along the Lewiston Trail.

Settlers along the Trail joined the Lewiston fugitives. When the pursuing Indians reached the Tuscarora Reservation the inhabitants, after a short resistance, joined the other fugitives fleeing eastward. The few men on horseback hastened

ahead on the Lewiston Trail to warn other settlers of the approaching English and Indians.

EVERY HOME between Lewiston and Warren's Corners on or near the Lewiston Trail (Ridge Road) was deserted by the families and as far as Church Street. They were looted and burned.

Settlers on the Lake Road and up the east bank of the Eighteen Mile Creek to Van Horn's Mill suffered the same fate so that the west half of Niagara Co. was almost depopulated.

However, the raiders never got beyond Church street on the Lewiston Trail nor beyond Kempville (Olcott) on the Lake Road. A few inhabitants of Lewiston who had lingered too long after the alarm and resisted capture were killed and scalped by the Indians.

THE FRONTIER FUGITIVES had such short notice of the attack of the English and Indians that they had left most of their possessions behind. In some cases the women tied their silver and other small treasures in bags and dropped them in the well or hid them in the nearby underbrush.

The best account of this tragedy was written by Orsamus Turner, historian and editor of Lockport's first newspaper.

His account follows: "There was little warning, the Indians preceding the English soldiers swarmed out of the woods and commenced an indiscriminate shooting down of the fleeing citizens plundering and burning their log homes. Six or seven men and boys were killed and scalped."

On that day of Dec. 19, 1813, the Ridge Road section of the Lewiston Trail presented some of the harshest features of war and invasion. The inhabitants on the Frontier were retreating eastward, the Tuscarora Indians having a

prominent position in the fight. There was a small arsenal west of Howell's Creek where a few of the Tuscaroras and settlers stopped and drove the invaders back.

At Forsythe Corners they stopped long enough to decide whether to take the Ridge Road to Gaines where there was an Arsenal, or the Lewiston Trail to Batavia where there was also an arsenal.

The majority took the Lewiston Trail. All kinds of vehicles were used in this motley throng fleeing from the torch and the tomahawk of an invading foe.

THE TUSCARORA INDIANS effectually aided the flight of the citizens of Lewiston by firing at the Indians who were following them. Twice they made a stand against the foe. Their first stand was just before the invaders ascended the road to the Reservation. They gathered the whole nation, men women and children on the escarpment above the ascending road. The men had all the guns, the women each with a

gun barrel from below and a horn for every boy and girl. It was a big bluff but it held up the invaders for some time.

When the fugitives from the Niagara Frontier reached Warren's Corners they halted momentarily at the Forsythe Tavern (later Warren's Corners) expecting that Widow Forsythe and her two children would join them. However she was determined to stay behind and take her chances of the raiders getting that far. As it happened she made a wise choice because in a matter of a few weeks Militia from Batavia established a garrison of some 500 soldiers near Dickersonville, and her tavern was chosen to prepare rations for the garrison.

About the same time Sergeant Ezra Warren and two privates were stationed there. As we have seen the British and Indians were stopped at Church Street, west of Streeter's Corners. However on or about July 5, 1814 the Barracks at Hardscrabble (later Dickersonville) were burned by the enemy.

IT IS INTERESTING to note that after the War, Sergeant Warren and Mrs. Forsythe were married and the Tavern became Warren's Tavern and as the area began to attract settlers it became known as Warren's Corners.

Here the fugitives divided. Some continued eastward on the Ridge but the majority followed the Lewiston Road which at this point began a southeasterly course.

They felt reasonably sure that when they reached the Batavia Arsenal they would be out of danger. However by the time they reached the Genesee County line many of them stopped at the Tavern of James Walworth who had settled there in 1803. His tavern was dubbed the "Halfway House" and for many years was the only building between the Tonawanda Indian Reservation and Cold Springs.

At this tavern several families were reunited. Eventually reaching Batavia it is very probable they registered. If not they did so at Canandaigua. A short time later a committee stationed at that village distributed money to the head of each family whose losses on the Niagara Frontier left him practically penniless.

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4-19-67

Markers Will Be Placed At Historical Town Sites

By CLARENCE O. LEWIS

Niagara County Historian The Niagara County Historical Society has embarked on a program of erecting a plaque at various historical landmarks around our county. It was suggested at a recent meeting of the Board of Directors that in as much as we are a countywide organization we should start out with one marker in each of our 12 towns.

In mentioning the landmarks, we have tentatively selected in the various towns, it occurred to me that a brief account of the historical significance of each of these landmarks might be interesting.

In the Town of Royaltown, we have selected the site on Griswold Street where stood the log cabin in which the famous Belva Lockwood was born in 1830. Her maiden name was Belva Bennet. Her biography has appeared several times in this column.

Among her many accomplishments in the then man's world of her adult years were obtaining numerous rights formerly denied to women. She was a prominent lawyer and was one of the leaders of the Equal Rights Political Party. Twice she was its nominee for president of the United States, once in 1884 and again in 1888.

IN THE TOWN OF CAMBRIA it has been difficult to select the most historic landmark because there are so many deserving recognition. We have finally selected the old Forsythe or Warrens Tavern on the south-west corner of the Lockport - Cambria Town Line Road and the Ridge Road, (Route 104).

John Forsythe opened a Tavern there as early as 1810. In that year DeWitt Clinton, Peter B. Porter and another crossed the state, selecting a tentative line for the Erie Canal which was then being agitated. They stopped at a number of different taverns overnight. In their report they stated that the Forsythe Tavern provided the best accommodations of any between Rochester and Lewiston.

In 1812, John Forsythe died leaving his widow and two or three children. During the war, Sgt. Ezra Warren and two other soldiers were stationed there to intercept deserters from the Frontier Forces. In 1814, this Tavern distributed rations to the barracks of about 500 soldiers at "Hardscrabble." The area a few years later was called Dickersonville.

After the war was over and Sgt. Warren was discharged, he married the widow Forsythe and thereafter the area was called Warrens Corners.

The tavern was "mail stop" for the stage coaches and continued to be one of the cleanest and best kept taverns on the Ridge. One incident that occurred there in 1825 came to my attention in 1953. After confirming it with several descendants of Ezra Warren I made it the subject of one of my stories. Because the story was so unique it was picked up by the Associated Press and printed in many of the newspapers all over the country, to my very great surprise. Many times since 1953, when attending various historical meetings, I have been asked

to tell this true story. **EZRA WARREN HAD A BAR** in his tavern and serving the best liquors, it was well patronized.

In 1825, the Great Temperance Movement which reached its peak about 1840 had started and preachers of all denominations were telling of the evils of liquor drinking. At the old wooden Methodist Church at Warren's Corners, in 1825, an evangelist preached on this and kindred subjects. Mr. Warren was converted and, as he afterwards stated "Baptised by the Holy Spirit." He refused a church baptism.

The legend prevails at the Corners that he dreamed the Lord directed him to cease selling liquor and begin preaching the Gospel and the evils of intemperance.

At any event, the next morning he rolled all the barrels and kegs of liquor out of the basement into the swale south of the tavern. The bottom of the swale being only a little below the basement. With his ax he broke them open and the gully was flooded with whiskey, brandy and brandied cherries.

As was the custom in those days, domestic animals were not confined by fences but ran at large (even in the village Ezra Warren realized what streets here in Lockport). Each animal had a mark of some kind which was registered with the town clerk. All the hogs around Warren's Corners were to be found near the tavern looking for scraps of food.

When Ezra drained the liquor barrels many of the neighbors' hogs were there and proceeded to eat the cherries and lap up the liquor. Soon they began to wobble, then as they continued to imbibe they could barely keep on their feet and finally fell over in a stupor. It was then that Ezra Warren realized what had happened to the hogs. He had to send a message to the various owners to come and get their intoxicated hogs. They came with teams and "mud boats" and picked up their hogs.

Ezra Warren thereafter traveled from place to place preaching the word of God and the evils of intemperance. He never became an ordained minister, because he refused to be baptized, but he undoubtedly had a tremendous influence in aiding the Temperance Movement. He afterwards was called "Father Warren." He died in 1879 in the 90th year of his life.

AT BURT in the Town of Newfane, we are going to replace a marker that vandals shot full of holes and rust finished. It marked the approximate spot where in 1810 Levi Ellis built a "grist mill" which he soon sold to James Van Horn who had settled across the road shortly after the mill was built.

Mr. Van Horn contracted with Fort Niagara to supply flour to the Fort and the Frontier Military Forces. In late December 1813, after the English had captured Fort Niagara, the commander under orders of his superior, sent a company of "Red Coats" specifically to burn the Van Horn Mill and thus shut off the supply of flour upon which the Frontier soldiers had depended. His orders also were to burn all the structures on the Lake Road and up the

Eighteen Mile Creek to the flour mill.

The sergeant in command of the invaders was induced by Mrs. Joseph Pease, wife of the miller, to roll out a sufficient number of barrels of flour to supply the area settlers for a few weeks.

They then set fire to the mill and were about to set fire to the Pease house. Mrs. Pease asked them to help carry out the contents first, suggesting that they bring up two barrels of brandy from the cellar. They did this and at the invitation of Mrs. Pease they partook so freely of the brandy that a more friendly feeling was engendered and they neglected to burn the Pease house and even released her son whom they were going to take back to the fort as prisoner.

James Van Horn rebuilt the mill after the War and added a saw mill and a few years later a woolen mill. A crude dam in the Creek gave a "head" of water for power to operate the mills.

The brick house still standing there, was built by Mr. Van Horn about 1823. It was the first brick house in the Town of Newfane. The first town meeting of Newfane was held there in 1824. The area was called "Van Horn's Mills."

In 1876 when the RWO Railroad passed through the village, the name was changed to Newfane Station and in 1903 to Burt, in honor of Burt Van Horn. We believe a historical marker briefly outlining the British destruction there is warranted.

Historian Sees Interest In Landmarks Increasing

BY CLARENCE O. LEWIS
Niagara County Historian

The controversy over progress vs. landmarks becomes more intensive and more vital each year. Here in Niagara County we are beginning to realize that there are few if any counties in the United States that have a more interesting and important history.

In the past we have witnessed the gradual destruction of many landmarks that vividly recalled important events in our history. This is particularly regrettable for our students of history. However there seems to be an increasing interest in Niagara County history and in the preservation of the remaining landmarks that are significant events in that history.

There are still some concrete evidences of early Indian occupation prior to the white man's appearance.

The two Indian sites most prolific in artifacts are "Kienuka" on the escarpment in the Tuscarora Reservation, in Lewiston and the Cambria site on the escarpment at the north end of the Blackman Road. Other productive sites are along the river in Lewiston. By means of artifacts found in these sites our archeologists have traced Indian occupation back approximately 4,000 years.

IN THE PROJECTED HISTORICAL PARK in Lewiston some 1,800 years

ago an Indian nation commonly called the "Mound Builders" erected a large mound in which our archeologists have been digging for the past two summers. I believe their findings will appear in print some time this year. It is quite possible that this Indian mound may be restored to its former shape and size.

In 1626 the first documented arrival of a French Priest on our Frontier in or near the present village of Lewiston marked the beginning of French Occupation. There is Fort Niagara built by the French in 1726. There is the old Stone Chimney now in Porter Park, Niagara Falls, built also by the French for a two floor fireplace in Fort Du Portage on the upper Niagara River.

In the near future The Niagara Frontier State Park Commission, will, we expect, be marking and in some cases perhaps restoring such French installations in the Village of Lewiston as LaSalle's log cabin, Joncaire's Trading Post, the French Fort, also the gully into which La Motte and Father Hennepin pulled their 10-ton sailing vessel after unloading the workmen and many of the parts for LaSalle's 40-ton sailing vessel to be built on the upper Niagara River.

The English occupation of the Niagara Frontier began in 1759 when they captured Fort Niagara and gained

control of the whole Niagara Frontier. Strangely enough the Old Stone Chimney built by the French as described above represents the only structure reminiscent of the English Occupation as well as the French on the upper Niagara.

The French burned their Fort Du Portage rather than let it fall into the hands of the English. The "Stone Chimney" survived the fire and when Fort Schlosser was built by the English on the same site one of the buildings designated the Stedman House was built against the Stone Chimney so that it served two fireplaces before which the English soldiers and John Stedman, the Portage Wagon Train Master, sat on winter evenings enjoying their pipes and hot toddy.

THAT OLD CHIMNEY being in the "path of progress" was eventually moved to Porter Park and by means of previously numbered stones was re-erected in its original form.

During the 37 years of occupation, the English built the block houses at Fort Niagara and repaired the damage their siege guns had caused. They improved the French Portage from Lewiston to The Upper River so that wagon trains could transport trade goods up and furs down the Portage.

After the Seneca Indians ambushed a wagon train at the Devil's Hole in 1763 and massacred all but two of the party and all but eight of a relief column from an English Fort at Lewiston, they built 11 blockhouses along the portage. Today we know the exact site of only two of these blockhouse sites.

In 1796 the English finally evacuated Fort Niagara, 13 years after the Revolutionary War decided our ownership of the Niagara Frontier: An American garrison took over the Fort.

Significant of American occupation are a number of additions including the cleverly constructed stone wall on the river side of the fort built in 1839 and the brick casement built in 1861. The many barracks, mess halls and officers houses built outside of the Old Fort have recently been razed.

UP TO 1800 there had been no colonization in the future Niagara County. In 1802 the first two bona-fide American settlers built their log homes: Lemuel Cook located on the same site in Lewiston where during the French Occupation had been Joncaires Trading Post called "The Magizin Royale."

At the eastern end of Niagara County (actually part of Genesee County at that time), Joshua Slayton built his log cabin near the junction of the present Slayton Settlement and Orangeport Roads. From 1802 until the War of 1812 many settlers came to our area.

(Continued On Page 23)

Historian

(Continued From Page 21)

Of the structures built in the western part or what now are the Towns of Porter, Lewiston, Niagara and Wheatfield all but two or three taverns along the Ridge Road in Lewiston were burned by the English and Indians in the War of 1812. Altogether it was estimated that about 334 buildings were burned and after the war the owners claimed damages from the Federal Government.

Taverns built before the War and still standing with very few structural changes are Howell Tavern in Cambria and Ezra Warren's Tavern at Warrens Corners, both of which were described a few weeks ago with the suggestion that historical markers should be placed in front of them.

There are two other structures formerly taverns on the Ridge Road in Lewiston that some historians believe were built before the War of 1812 but proof is lacking.

AT McNALLS CORNERS on Chestnut Ridge is a brick house with a cobblestone coach house built in 1818 by John McNall and operated as a tavern by him for quite a number of years. Just east of the corners, on the north side of Chestnut Ridge, is a brick house built in 1831-2 and very little changed over the years. On the Slayton Settlement Road, a short distance east of the Orangeport Road, there is a stone house said to have been built by Stephen Bugbee in 1815. Later a brick house was built in front and attached to the old stone house.

In the Towns of Wilson, Royalton and Hartland there are many beautiful cobblestone houses built largely between 1828 and 1848. This type of masonry is more or less a lost art: Attempts to repair damaged parts of cobblestone houses by duplicating the original cobblestone surface has never so far as my observation goes been completely successful.

AT CHILDS IN ORLEANS CO. there is an organization called "The Cobblestone Society" dedicated to the preservation of our Western N. Y. cobblestone houses and to the historical significance of each.

So far as this office knows, there is now just one cobblestone house in the Town of Lockport. It is a very fine example of that type of structure. It is located on the Slayton Settlement Road, a short distance east of the Lockport - Olcott Road. It was built by James Goodrich in the early 1840's.

Fortunately most of the old houses mentioned above are occupied by people who take pride in preserving their houses in their original form. However a historical plaque should mark those having the most important historical significance.

1/20/66

12/15/65

3 Historic Old Taverns Are Still Well Preserved

By CLARENCE O. LEWIS

Not long ago we received a request from a governmental agency for a list of all the old landmarks in Niagara County which we believed should be preserved.

It was a difficult request with which to comply. In last week's article we mentioned a few in both Niagara Falls and Lockport. Scattered around the county are a considerable number of landmarks, some of which

are particularly significant in the history of our county.

First, we have at Warren's Corners on the southwest corner of the Town Line Road and Route 104, the old Ezra Warren Tavern.

In 1805 John Forsythe and his wife, after a slow and strenuous trip from near LeRoy, arrived at what is now Warren's Corners but was then part of the primeval forest with only a narrow stump - littered road where now is a beautiful paved highway. From Warren's Corners to Wright's Corners this trail was impassable during the spring and fall.

Soon after John Forsyth's arrival other settlers began to appear because the choicest land owned by the Holland Land Co. lay along the Ridge Road, between Warren's Corners and the Niagara River.

It was the policy of the Holland Land Co. to locate privately - owned taverns about every 10 miles on their roads. In most cases they gave either financial assistance or donated the land, occasionally both.

JOHN FORSYTH opened a tavern which by 1810 was, according to the Diary of DeWitt Clinton, the finest on the Ridge Road. Presumably this first tavern was of logs. John Forsyth died in 1812 and his widow and two or three children survived.

Late in 1812 or early in 1813 the commander of Fort Niagara stationed three of his soldiers at the Forsyth Tavern to intercept deserters from the frontier forces. One of these soldiers was Ezra Warren. He and the widow Forsyth fell in love and after the war ended and he was discharged, they were married. Gradually the area became known as Warren's Corners, and the tavern became the Warren's Corners Tavern.

The frame tavern is said to have been built in 1810

and is still standing today as a well preserved residence. We know that army rations for a 500-man barracks at Dickersonville were distributed from the Warren Tavern. Beginning at 1816 it was a regular stage coach mail stop. Many famous people no doubt stopped there over the years.

In 1825 Ezra Warren was converted to a Temperance Advocate and his vision and subsequent pouring out of his liquor and its being lapped up by the neighbor's hogs, has been related in this column several times. In the 150 or more years of existence, the tavern has acquired more than enough historical significance to warrant its preservation and an historical marker. The present owners are proud of the old tavern.

A SHORT DISTANCE beyond Streeter's Corners, on the south side of the Ridge Road and on the west side of Howell's Creek, there was a famous old tavern, now a residence. In 1808 William Howell erected a log house which was soon converted into a tavern and a short time later, as Ridge Road travel increased and his tavern became popular, he built a frame tavern with the bar in an extension to the east.

Directly back of William Howell's log tavern was a branch of the Twelve Mile Creek. It was later named Howell's Creek. In pioneer days it carried quite a body of water with strong enough current to operate a water wheel. Mr. Howell built a saw mill on the Creek and sawed the lumber for his frame tavern about 1810. Remains of the walls are still visible in the Creek.

In 1810 DeWitt Clinton in his diary speaks of stopping overnight at Howell's Tavern. On June 6, 1825, General LaFayette on his way to Lockport stopped there. The general abstained from liquor so while his companions were at the bar he sat down at the table with 12-year-old Harriet Howell who at his request had made a pitcher of lemonade. The general took quite a fancy to Harriet. Strangely enough the tablecloth and the pitcher which contained the lemonade are today prized possessions of two Lockport families.

On Dec. 19, 1813, when the English and Indians crossed the River and looted and burned the Niagara Frontier most of the panic stricken refugees fled eastward along the ridge and past this tavern. Just west of the tavern there was a small brick structure containing a dozen muskets and ammunition.

When the Tuscarora Indians whose village had also been burned reached that magazine they together with a number of the white men resolved to make a stand there against the pursuing English and Indians and thus gain time for the women and children and the old folks to get a safe distance ahead. They made such a strong resistance to the invaders that they turned back toward Lewiston and thus the Howell Tavern escaped the looting and the fire-brand.

That old tavern, now a well preserved residence, is still standing and should have an historical marker back far enough from the road so that autoists could turn out of the traffic lane and stop to read it. A similar plan for a marker at the Warren's Corners old tavern should be followed. Fortunately both of these old landmarks are occupied by families that take great pride in their history and in preserving them intact. I feel sure they would welcome an historical marker.

In the village of Lewiston on the southwest corner of Center and Fifth Streets there stands the old Kelsey Tavern erected in 1820 and operated by Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Kelsey. The former died but the widow continued to operate it as a first class tavern. On the late afternoon of June 5, 1825, General Lafayette, his son George Washington Lafayette and his secretary and valet, stopped there for the night. An upstairs bedroom had been prepared with great care by Mrs. Kelsey for the famous guest. During the evening most of the villagers gathered there to greet the general.

After the general was well on his way, it was discovered that he had left behind his small medicine chest. That chest together with a letter written and signed by General Lafayette are prized possessions of the Niagara County Historical Society's Museum.