



Binghamton Township Historical Society NEWSLETTER

Serving Past and Present Residents of the Town of
Binghamton, N.Y. and its Neighboring Towns

Logo by Doug Webb

Vol. 9 No 1

JAN – FEB – MAR 2012

The Binghamton Township Historical Society is dedicated to the preservation of the history of the region and its inhabitants. It meets on the first Tuesday of every month at 1:30 PM. from April through October in the Fellowship Hall behind the old Hawleyton Methodist Church located at the junction of Hawleyton Road (an extension of Pennsylvania Avenue) and Saddlemire Rd. just after the Park Ave./Hawleyton Rd. Junction. Visitors are welcome. Annual dues are \$10.00 for individuals \$15.00 for families (due by September – start of our fiscal year) and includes the Newsletter. Non members may receive a subscription to newsletter for \$5.00 a year. Newsletter in color may be viewed free on www.townofbinghamton.com.



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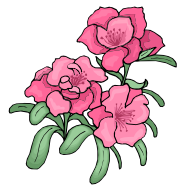
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Brooks- Headrick



IN MEMORIAM



It is with the most profound sorrow that we dedicate this issue of our newsletter to the treasurer of the Binghamton Township Historical Society, Agnes Hogan Gabriel who passed away January 16th. “Aggie” took care of getting this newsletter printed and mailed. She kept all the lists of members and others to whom the newsletter is sent as well as keeping track of all the membership, and their changing addresses. She most recently was in charge of all the contributions to the recent Museum/Church roof fund and attempted to send each donor a thank you note.

Agnes, the daughter of Michael and Teresa Hogan, leaves her brothers, Harold “Ben” (who still lives on the family homestead on Hogan Rd), and Ralph on Hawleyton Rd. and a sister, Marie Hogan Buckley. She was the widow of Armand Gabriel and recently lost a son, Andrew Gabriel. She is survived by sons Philip (and Cynthia) and Joseph (and Amy), seven grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

To say she will be sorely missed by all of us especially the many oldsters to whom she delivered Communion for her church, is an understatement.

More deaths since our last newsletter.

- Long time BTHS member and contributor to our newsletter, Marjorie Rawlings died just after our last newsletter went to the printer.
- Many will remember, Dawn Pierce, the Susquehanna Valley High School nurse-teacher, who also died last autumn.
- Former SVHS student Stephen M. Sabol of Brackney died in November at age 50, much too young. He worked at the Brackney Inn.
- Delia Witteman of Conklin Forks also died in November.
- *Celia Ward Casey, daughter of Veronica and Thomas Ward of Brackney. died Nov 16th.
- F. William Gardner died at age 89 also on Nov. 16th

Our sincerest sympathies to all the families saddened by these deaths.

*More on the Wards in Genevieve Giblin Sullivan's article.

President's Corner

Happy New Year to you all! Our biggest news is that the roof was completed at the beginning of November. This project has been a source of concern to BTHS officers since at least 1985. Our goal was \$30,000 to cover the estimate, which was met in only 9 months of fundraising. We couldn't have done it without your help, and especially the help of some special anonymous "angels" who filled in the large financial gaps, especially our donor who matched \$10,000 of the funds we raised. Actual costs were about \$33,350 (forgive me, my newsletter deadline is here, my records are all upstairs and because of a broken ankle, I can't get up there to retrieve them). Cost overruns were due to unforeseen needs like underlayment plywood, fixing damaged or missing siding and venting, and in one place a complete rebuilding of the area including the underlying structure.



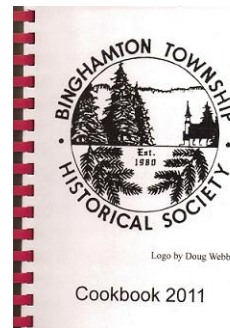
G.S. Construction was our contractor, and Gene Scott, the owner, lives in the Township. He had his crew do many little extras for us at no charge. We

asked if they might paint the places on the front of the Church up near the top where our ladders couldn't reach, and of course there was extra cost for that. But they tacked up little places where the siding had slipped, filled in the deep grooves in the soft ground that the boom vehicle had left, cleaned up all the little nails and staples from the ground and driveway, and generally kept our small treasury in mind when the bigger repairs were needed (and they always consulted us first). They even winterized our water pipes when they were finished, and a tree whose branches overhung our new roof was trimmed.

We will be putting together a notebook with pictures and explanations of the different phases of the roof replacement. If there is enough interest, we might even publish it. Seeing the original roof construction as it was revealed only served to strengthen the admiration we have for those who originally built it. We even have one or two of the original shingles in our collection.

"Thank you" doesn't seem adequate to express the appreciation we feel for all who made this project possible. But we'll say it anyway – THANK YOU!!

Cookbooks



We published and printed about 325 copies of our historical cookbooks which helped defray our roof costs. The books contain recipes from many residents of our Town, and also from many more former residents. Some of these date back two or three generations.

There are also a few photographs, and some short vignettes giving glimpses into the lives of our town's founding families.

There are still almost 100 copies available at a cost of \$15 (plus \$4 shipping and handling if mailed). They can be obtained from Phyllis Hawley, Esther Pettengill, Eleanor Haines, or from the Town Clerk's office. First come, first served. They make excellent gifts and include recipes for foods enjoyed by all ages.

Remembrances of Eleanor Shimer Brooks

Interviewed by daughter, Janice Brooks-Headrick
via phone January 12, 2012

Subject: School days, mostly Grove School,
Hawleyton, NY



paid attention to grades ahead of you, you wouldn't get behind. We all helped the younger ones. I taught Wimpy** to read. "

"Grove School is at the end of Maxian Road, I went there through 8th Grade. " Eleanor Shimer Brooks said. " When we graduated, the whole district met in Union. Genevieve Giblin was first in class, I was second." Eleanor was born to Hazel Webb Shimer and Charles Shimer in 1923. They lived on Hotchkiss St., Binghamton, until she was in grade school. They lived in a series of houses in Town of Binghamton, eventually moving to an upstairs apartment over a garage owned by Gertrude Webb Lee and Richard Lee. Eleanor recalls all the houses, owners, and location. Her long term memory spans more than 80 years of Hawleyton history.

"I had Mrs. Baker in fifth grade. When she came, she put everybody back a grade, except Mo*. She said we were not up to standards. Another teacher, Clara Iantha Moorehouse was just out of college. In 8th grade, we had Lena Lazaroni. She asked me to call her Phyllis," Eleanor said. "She and Larry Lazaroni and another fellow went to Oswego for college. Then they came down here..." "Mom, remember when I was having a lot of trouble with math?" Jan interjected. "My teacher, Mr. Smith, insisted on coming to the house to talk to my parents. He was the strictest teacher. I was in 7th or 8th grade, and I dreaded the meeting. When he knocked on the door, Daddy answered, and greeted Mr. Smith as a long-lost friend. Daddy called him Larry Lazaroni."

Eleanor said, "Well, he changed his name to his wife's when he got married. Smith was easier than Lazaroni. He boarded with us at the Brooks Farm for a while, over in Castle Creek, when Daddy lived there. I think there is a photo at the Historic Society with Lean Lazaroni in the picture. That was Grove School. All eight grades went there together. We all signed a paper, put it in a glass jar, and buried it on the left side of that big stone front step. It's probably cemented in now.

"To be reviewed, all one grade would go up front, while you were doing your assigned work. If you

"We used outhouses. One year, at Halloween, there was a horse buggy on top of them. I'm not going to say who I thought did it. " Eleanor guessed who she thought it was, but said not to write it down. "I'm not positive it was those two. But that did create a fuss."

"Clarence Shurtleff was the Superintendent of Schools. He choose the teachers. He'd take care of the fire, but he had different boys who cleaned up, kept the fire going. Leland Shimer, my brother, was janitor for a long time. There was a big woodshed. For water, there was a tank, a keg with a spout, and a single dipper. We all used that dipper, and you know how much I liked that. " Eleanor voiced a shudder. " They got the water from Coon's, they had a free flowing spring. The water was delicious. "

"We'd go on Nature Study Hikes. We went to Bear Rocks, or Indian Rocks. Mo* was small enough, he went into the bear caves. We would pick and eat wintergreen berries. "

Eleanor detailed which roads, Maxian, Foland, Powderhouse, went into and though the French Tract, and how they were connected. She called it "the old Railroad." She talked about the other schools, Ingraham Hill, near the Webb Homestead, and Hawleyton School, where the town barns are now. "They moved Hawleyton School, across from Smales' house."

"My classmates were friends, like one big brotherhood. " Eleanor said, "We knew each others "secrets". I've known some of them all their lives, introduced them to their spouses, went to their weddings, was in their weddings. Now, we are grandparent and great-grandparents. That doesn't happen much anymore. "

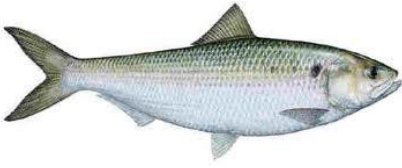
Eleanor Shimer Brooks now lives in Vestal, near four of her daughters. She would be happy to talk to old friends, and make new ones. Her children, grandchildren and new great-granddaughter keep her going. She would appreciate updates from former classmates.

*Leland Moses, Jr.

**Robert Vosburg

Dark Spring Nights on the Susquehanna

by Margaret Hadsell



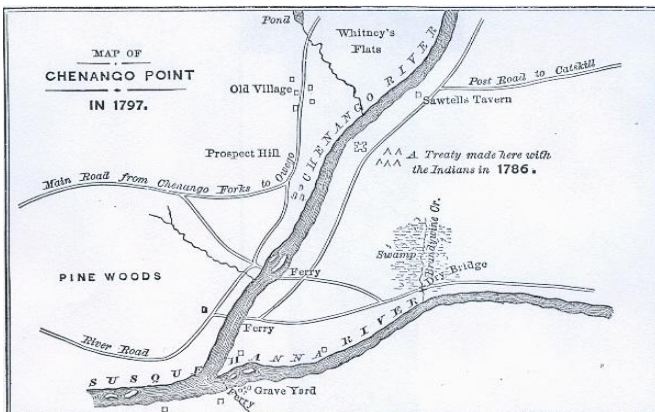
Just as robins herald spring, so do the menhaden. The river ice is gone and by mid to

late April, the sun is beginning to raise the water temperature. Small cabins and tents on shore shelter the men who wait each night for the darkness to close in before positioning themselves in the water in a small boat. In the stillness they listen for the churning water that signals the fish's arrival.

Like salmon, menhaden, an anadromous species better known as American shad, return to their fresh water origins to spawn. A member of the herring family, shad have silvery sides, a white belly, and a green or greenish blue back. These colors deepen when the fish enters fresh water to spawn. An operation called "sweeping", was done in the shallow frigid water, on the darkest nights, without the use of lights. Six to eight men were required to handle each sixteen to thirty rod long net...a length equivalent to approximately 265 to 500 feet long. Herring arrived with the shad but were less valuable so some fisheries constructed their nets to allow them to pass through.

Early histories mention three major fishing areas, Union, Binghamton and at the Island at Oquago as well as many lesser ones in between. The Binghamton shad fishing areas were opposite the Dry Bridge, on the Chenango opposite Bevier's, and the mouth of the Snake Creek in Conklin.

Map of Dry Bridge below



Before the late 1820s, shad were abundant in the Susquehanna as far upstream as the source of the river. Typically the shad would arrive in mid to late April and be fished through May. Even after depositing their eggs, the shad continued up stream until their strength was spent leaving the shores covered with thousands of dead fish...a feast for wild animals that came down to the river's edge to feed.



At 3 to 5 pounds, the shad in the first few catches would sell for eight to ten pence each with the price dropping as low as three pence by the end of the run. The steadily increasing population in towns along the river at the turn of the nineteenth century made shad fishing a lucrative business each spring.

By fall, now three to four inches long, the young shad fry would choke the eel weirs across the river as they passed down stream toward the Chesapeake Bay on the way to the open Atlantic.

According to a newspaper article in the New York Sun dated 10 May 1908, the beginning of the end of shad fishing on the upper Susquehanna occurred on April 15, 1827. That was the year Captain Tom Stump, a shad fisherman, stretched his 5 mile long seine across the mouth of the Susquehanna at Havre De Grace on the night of April 10th. A violent storm blew gale force winds for four days, jamming the shad against the net and preventing any from swimming upstream to spawn. The straining net was hauled in on April 15th exceeding the typical haul of 100,000-200,000 per day. After selling over 250,000, and with more coming in daily, Captain Stump knew they had to be sold quickly so he

dropped the price from \$25/100 to \$4/100. As small mountains of shad were building on shore, he dispatched messengers to towns for miles around inviting everybody to take all they wanted. What wasn't eaten fertilized the local farm lands. It was said at the time . What wasn't eaten fertilized the local farm lands. It was said at the time that more than 15 million shad were caught by the Stump Fishery that spring.

While the reduction of the shad population in the late 1820s is attributed to a combination of over-fishing, log rafting, pollution and river damming, Captain Stump's haul of 1827 which interrupted the spawning cycle is considered to be a major factor in the subsequent decline of shad fishing in the upper Susquehanna.

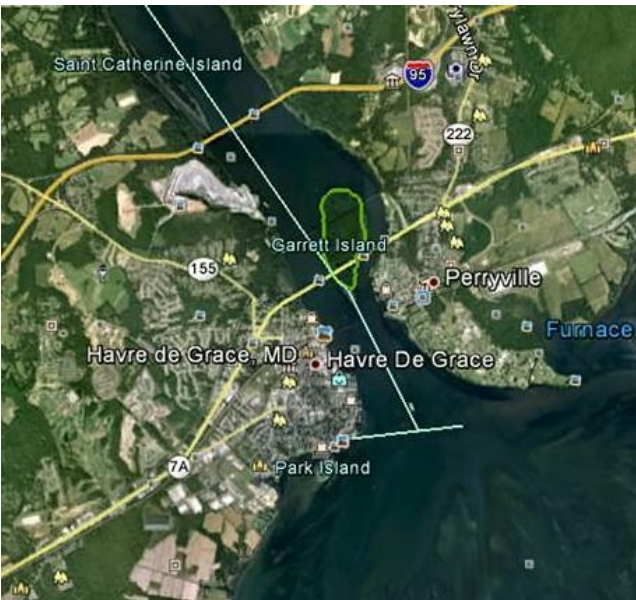


Shad Barge

Tagged shad have been shown to summer in Nova Scotia and winter in Florida before making their way to the Delaware Bay where they begin swimming up the rivers along the east coast.

Today shad can still be found in the Delaware River where they spawn near the Delaware Water Gap. Spectators line the river bank to watch the shad skeining as boats manipulate the huge nets across the river during the annual shad festival in Lambertville, NJ. Once caught for food, the shad is becoming a popular game fish in the Delaware Valley.

In an attempt to reintroduce the shad to the Susquehanna, a permanent fish passage at Conowingo Dam ,located near the mouth of the Susquehanna River in Maryland, was constructed in 1991. Fish passageways at the Holtwood and Safe Harbor dams were built in 1997.



Havre De Grace

Abundant supplies of shad continued to be fished in the Susquehanna at Havre De Grace after 1890 or almost 100 years after their disappearance from the river here. Large fisheries there staked barges in the river that held tents or cabins for the men and provided a place to process the fish. An 1890 description of the catch reads: "They leap and jump and squirm and flop, and if the sun is shining the sight looks like a big mass of boiling quicksilver.

TRIVIA QUIZ

1. On what date was the Town of Binghamton established?
2. In what two years did the TOB acquire land from the Town of Vestal?
3. What Indian trader was associated with both the Towns of Binghamton and Vestal?
4. Who is considered the first permanent settler in what is now the city of Binghamton?
5. How did the earliest settlers obtain goods other than what they produced for themselves?

(Answers on page 8)

An Original Radio Shack

(Milks Hill Radio Shack)
by Eleanor Haines



The advent of the September 2011 flood brought to mind Harley Milks' 1987 oral history. In his personal story, Harley described to the Binghamton Township Historical Society the birth of his radio shack on Milks Hill and the HAM radio operators who came to use it. According to Harley, if complete communications were knocked out "like floods and hurricanes," the shack would become a disaster site with amateur radio operators "going up there on higher elevation and transmitting a relay." Read on to set the stage from his memories for the role of Binghamton Amateur Radio Association (BARA) members during the September 2011 flood.

As Harley told it, his interest in radio led him to be one of the first locally to have a CB radio. In the '60's, his employer, Morris Distributing, bought the DeLuxe Bowling Alley; and Harley and co-worker Carl Pancoast worked after hours that summer taking the lumber out of the bowling alley following their cutting the hard-wood alley lanes into 15 foot strips. Harley used his share of the lumber and some trade offs for 2 x 6's to build a shack on the hill above his home on Milks Road. Soon after he regularly carried his first (early local) television set to his shack for better reception and entertained viewers—friends, relatives and neighbors—with the Friday night fights. Then the HAM radio operator BARA group began meeting weekly at the shack on the land which he donated at no charge, including electricity wired from his home up the hill to the building. He was an honorary member of BARA for fifty years, but he never became licensed: "Guess I never had time." Before the day of sophisticated equipment of chips and diodes, he said BARA members "used to have to lug around stuff weighing a hundred pounds." Every year at the annual amateur radio field day, he said "there were probably 40 to 50 cars up there with different ham radio operators and they would have a world contest to see who could make the most contacts. They won nationally several times."

John Carrington, long term BARA member and a current director, describes Harley--deceased

in 1995--and his neighbor, Stan Progy of Progy Road in the Town, as BARA benefactors. John says Stan "keeps down a couple of acres of hayfield around the shack with his riding mower." BARA is still up and running, more than 70 members meeting these days once a month at the Town Hall but still using the Milks' shack, primarily for emergency operations practice and as a social gathering to promote their hobby. At the end of June each year, the national AARL Field Day event continues, giving the BARA group the opportunity to compete with over 30,000 participating HAM radio operators. Since electricity and other public infrastructures are among the first to fail during a natural disaster or severe weather, this American contest gives BARA HAMs the chance to compete nationally with the intent to reach as many other individual radio operators as possible. Points are awarded each contestant for contacts made, added up and submitted to AARL. BARA has scored very highly in the event in past years and still does well, though a smaller group today.

Town resident John Connors, RACES* Emergency Coordinator for Broome, and Brian Adeo, ARES** Emergency Coordinator for Broome, together with other BARA members and other amateur radio operators (there are some 300 licensed HAMs in this area), helped in assisting Broome County Emergency Services on Upper Front Street in Town of Dickinson during the devastating September flood. Their purpose was to provide communication between different Red Cross shelters throughout the region and emergency dispatch upon the failure of all other means of communication. Though thankfully not necessary, such activity would have provided services by these Ham radio individuals using hand-held radios to both transmit and receive messages from fire, police and emergency personnel.

Unsung heroes in the September 2011 flood. Words that describe these radio-equipped amateur HAMs, who, along with many other Broome County residents in various situations, quietly distinguished themselves by voluntarily stepping in to answer both obvious and obscure needs. Was Harley there too?...

(The BARA group is accessible on-line at <http://www.wtsn.binghamton.edu/bara/>.)

*RACES. Radio Emergency Civil Emergency Service (formerly known as Civil Defense).

**ARES. Amateur Radio Emergency Service

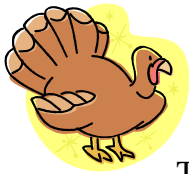
Out Our Way and Other Memories of Genevieve Giblin Sullivan

by Joan Moseng and Eleanor Haines

Last fall during our visit to her south-side Binghamton home, Genevieve recalled her grandparents Thomas and Veronica O'Day Ward. Their homestead in Brackney, Pennsylvania was where they started a hostelry in the early 1900's. A one-night stopover, the inn accommodated people traveling by horse and wagon from Binghamton to Montrose and back. To take care of the horses, the Ward's provided stables including a large watering trough.

The Brackney Inn changed hands about the time of World War II. Mary Murphy Foster operated the Inn with her husband, Gerald Foster. Following Gerald's early death, Mary ran the place with the help of her sister Lucille and her good friend Hannah Kelly. Genevieve said it was started primarily for the returning servicemen. Quite a success, the place became widely known as "Mary Foster's."

Genny recalled that in her early days the term "Out Our Way" was along Hawleyton Road from the home of her parents, Walter and Kathryn Ward Giblin, directly south passing the Hairpin Turn to the Pennsylvania border. The Daniel Wall family lived along that road beyond the Giblin place; they raised turkeys in a large hen house. At



sale time, the Wall family drove the turkeys down the laneway north to Lynn Meeker's farm. If you have ever wondered where the term

Turkey Lane came from, Genny solved the puzzle: it was the term used to describe the Wall's route to Meeker's.

Tom Sullivan told us he believed "Out Our Way" over the years evolved into a broader interpretation to include Brackney, Silver Lake, and New York State and Pennsylvania environs, particularly the people in St. Augustine's Roman Catholic parish. The Giblin family attended St. Augustine's along with many other Irish families along the southern Binghamton township and northern Pennsylvania border towns.



Tom smiled about Tillie driving her Model T Ford in the late '30's. Her car sported a rumble seat and three floor pedals, the middle pedal for shifting gears.

Near the Giblin family on Hawleyton Road lived the Caddens: James and Ellie, parents of Jim who married Catherine Mahoney. Their eldest son Joe was killed in World War I. His siblings Helena Flaherty and James remain in the area; brother John recently passed away. Other Irish families in the Pennsylvania border area include Bill and Ida Donovan, children Gerald, Margaret and Loretta on Donovan Road; the McCormick's and their children, Margaret, Jack and Tom. Also the John Marrer family (his wife, Agnes Ryan, came over from Ireland) included Frances, Betty, Genevieve, Eileen, Pauline and Jack.



Another historic item from Gen was that her grandfather Thomas Ward bought the Hawleyton Telephone Company which his family operated for many years. And aside from the discussion about the Irish families and Out Our Way, she mentioned Rock Spring which was located alongside the west side of Hawleyton Road between Ingraham Hill and Foland Roads. For many years Town residents and people from near and far traveled to this roadside spring, filling their crockery and glass jugs with "pure" water. Rock Spring is no longer in use; and, although the door is hanging ajar, it clearly reads Rock Spring.



DOES ANY ONE ELSE REMEMBER?

The old, huge iron bowl which used to reside in the ditch near Charlie Reynolds driveway on Hawleyton Rd.? Was told it was used to water the horses and maybe cattle of the drovers passing through on their way to market. What ever happened to this landmark?

Remember? On Hawleyton Rd. across from Gillespie, the William's soda bar and on the other side, Williams's barbershop? Then his typewriter business? And before that, it was .a school room? It's now a residence.

Binghamton Township Historical Society
c/o Eleanor Haines
10 Bedford St.
Binghamton, NY 13905



Postmaster; if undeliverable as addressed
Please return to sender

TRIVIA QUIZ ANSWERS

1. 3 December 1855
2. 1862 and 1873
3. Amos Draper
4. Captain Joseph Leonard
5. They traded fur pelts for woolen goods, hats and shoes from peddlers traveling through the area.

The History of Daylight Saving Time (due Sunday, this March 11)



Following a few European countries' attempts, in 1918 during World War I the USA formally adopted the practice. Unpopular with the many farmers in our country, it was discontinued nationally a year later. A few states continued to use it making communications among states difficult. The practice was reinstated in World War II and was used year around called "War Time" from 1942 through 1945. From then till 1966 it was left up to the states, and again, there was inconvenience and confusion among them causing Congress to intervene with the "Uniform Time Act." (Even then some states opted not to comply.)

The dates of beginning and ending Daylight Saving Time have changed many times over the years until currently, since 2007, **it begins on the 2nd Sunday in March** and ends the first Sunday in November. The main purpose is to save energy, but there are still states and territories who refuse to observe this practice.

Some European countries use this system, but not on the same dates we do, further complicating international trade.

Source: The internet

(written by your editor on last March 13 with her body still trying to figure out what time it was!)

