



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 2

APR-MAY-JUNE 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 Museum-Fellowship Hall in the rear entrance 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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IN MEMORIAM



Stanley “Stan” Progy passed away in February at the age of 92. A Marine in WWII, Stan was awarded three Purple Hearts and two Bronze Stars. Upon his return home, he purchased three school buses to transport Hawleyton children to schools in Binghamton and Vestal. He took some kids to a roller skating rink once a month and left fond memories of his deeds to many.

In March, we were saddened to read of the death of Mike Harris Sr, former owner of Lone Maple Farm. Our sympathies go out to the whole Harris family.

An Apology

For errors in the Cadden family genealogy in the last Newsletter issue: Children of James & Ellen Cadden were Thomas, Joseph (killed in WWII), James, John, and Kathryn. Children of James E. and Kathryn Mahoney Cadden were Joseph (deceased), Helena, John (deceased), and James. We are sorry for the mix up.

Editor and Staff



PRESIDENT'S CORNER or The Saga of the Raccoons

by Esther Pettengill

We have had a busy few months while the museum was closed for the winter. Our roof is snug and secure, and we knew our troubles were over. Our bank balance was looking healthy and we hoped to be able to afford some of the other repairs needed. However, we did not count on the intelligence and perseverance of the wily raccoon. Long story short, we paid a hefty sum to have specialists (“**Fur and Feathers**” of New Milford, PA) trap (humanely !!!), remove, release (far away), and clean up after them. They also removed the entire upstairs ceiling in the fellowship hall. That exposed the bare bones of the construction which is fascinating, by the way. Then they cleaned and sanitized to remove the scent of the former furry residents.



We've now found fresh raccoon tracks but the repaired original point of entry is still holding. No animals got into the Church part of the building. Would you believe they have now come in through the CHIMNEY???

So, there's the bad news and good news. The BAD news -- cost of trapping, removing and releasing, then cleaning up after put a HUGE dent in our bank balance. The GOOD news -- removal and cleanup carries a 3 year warranty, so this second incursion is not an extra expense for us! HIDDEN “BLESSING” -- the ceiling needed to be torn down anyway. The critter people did that and also hauled it all away!

All this put us behind in our scheduling. We **WILL** be opening the museum in May, though. We look forward to seeing you on either the New York State Heritage Day on **Saturday, May 19th** between 12:00 noon and 5:00 PM, or after the **Memorial Day Parade on May 28th** from approximately 10:45 AM to 1:00 PM.

Also, look forward to another **Concert Fundraiser (“Raccoon Ramble”)** sometime in **June**. Last year's was well-received, although we would have

liked a bigger audience. We will advertise it as soon as plans are finalized.

More Apologies

Our sincerest apologies for any “red flag” stickers that may have been posted in error. Our treasurer, Aggie Gabriel, kept meticulous records of dues, newsletter subscriptions and donations. Unfortunately her cancer attacked viciously and her death was too sudden in January for her or any of us to transfer or keep an eye on the financial records.

In the process of collecting and sorting through all Aggie's records, some payments either did not get recorded or have been lost in the shuffle, from sometime in November 2011 through February 2012. If this copy of your newsletter has a sticker **in error** saying it is your final copy, please notify Esther Pettengill at 607-669-4151, or send an email: to Pet10gill@gmail.com (that's a number 10 after the “Pet”) or regular mail to 3639 Saddlemire Rd, Binghamton, NY 13903, so that you can continue to receive your newsletters uninterrupted.

As much as we try and want things to move along smoothly, sometimes these things happen. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

TASK FORCE NEEDED

Would you be willing to help us? Please consider becoming a member of a temporary small task force to help us inspect the building and museum to make a list of recommendations for projects needing attention. We will then call upon others to implement the list generated by the task force. Contact either Phyllis Hawley at 669-4186, or Esther Pettengill at 669-4151 for details. Dates proposed are: Tues June 5, 2012, 2 to 4 PM and Sat, June 9, 2012 10 AM to noon.

Cookbooks



There remain a few copies of our cookbook for sale available at a cost of \$15 (plus \$4 shipping and handling if mailed). They can still be obtained from Phyllis Hawley, Esther Pettengill, Eleanor Haines, or at the Town Clerk's office.

The History of Memorial Day

Esther Griffin



Many towns in the U.S. held remembrance observances in the three years after the Civil War, but it wasn't until May 30, 1868 that Decoration Day, as it was popularly called, was established

In Illinois, union soldier, surgeon Dr. B. F. Stevenson of the 14th Illinois Infantry, longed for “the touch of hands who had tramped the road together.” On Friday, April 6, 1866, Dr. Stevenson and eleven veterans of the Union Army formed the Grand Army of the Republic, said to be “the greatest patriotic, most comradely and unselfish organization that was ever known.”

Societies sprung up all over the states with several hundred thousand members. General John A. Logan became commander of the GAR which was headquartered in Washington, DC.

In May, 1868, two years after the GAR was founded, a Civil War veteran from Cincinnati, Ohio wrote the adjutant, “In some of the countries in Europe, it was the custom to strew with flowers in the springtime, the graves of heroes who had fallen in defense of their country.” He suggested such a custom might be appropriate “to commemorate the services of our comrades who had given their lives that the nation might not perish.” The adjutant took the letter to Gen. Logan who was serving in the House of Representatives.

Impressed, Logan issued an order that this be carried out and officials selected May, a month when flowers would be blooming. As May 31st was on a Sunday, (when they followed the 10 Commandments about the Sabbath strictly) May 30th was established. The GAR order reads, “The 30th of May 1868 is designated for the purpose of strewing with flowers or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village and hamlet churchyard in the land.”

On that occasion, at Arlington Cemetery, the graves of over 20,000 soldiers, both Union and Confederate were decorated, By the end of the 1800s, more and more communities celebrated Decoration Day. After World War I, it became an occasion for honoring those who had died in any of America's wars.....

Memorial Day is celebrated at Arlington National Cemetery each year with a small American flag placed on each grave..The President or Vice President also lays a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Thousands attend this ceremony. (In Europe, we are told, graves of fallen American soldiers are also decorated.)

For many of us, Decoration Day became a day to honor and remember all of our departed with the decorating of graves of our loved ones. In 1971, Congress officially declared Memorial Day a national holiday to be celebrated on the last Monday of May.

Information gleaned from the internet, but mostly from Gallantry in the Field, Potsdam and the Civil War by the Potsdam Public Museum, Potsdam, NY

Mystery Solved

Leon VanVorce called that the old iron watering bowl missing from the ditch by “Charlie and Gladys Reynolds’ house” was moved back by Mark VanVorce’s house to better protect it from scavengers after they found a woman trying to steal it for her yard or garden

An interesting Web Site
<http://www.Fulton History.com>

While this began as an attempt to put historical post cards of Fulton Co., NY on line, it has mushroomed to an attempt to scan all the old newspapers in NY State. Type in Hawleyton you'll get 5000 items, Hawleyton History 1833 items, Hawleyton Natives, 164 documents etc. Almost all old obits and social notices appear. A few scandals or arrests might make you chuckle. Good genealogical source also.

A Brutal Pace

by Janice Brooks-Headrick

The great American poet and philosopher, Bob Dylan, said " The great majority of American Heroes are anonymous." I want to tell you about my hero. I don't want him, and men like him, to remain anonymous.



My hero was a little skinny guy when he came out of World War II. I've seen pictures of him. In his uniform, he looked like Barney Fife, the puny, nervous deputy on the Andy Griffith Show.

He'd been badly burned in North Africa. They brought him home

(Cpr. Wilbur Brooks) on a hospital ship. He was in Walter Reed for months. They weren't sure he'd survive. The family kept the news from his mother, who learned of it from a neighbor lady, blabbing in church. He never told me the whole story until I was grown and gone from home for more than 20 years. Real heroes don't talk about heroics.

Now, my hero never got very big. At 80, he's shrinking, a little bitty fellow with big ears and a big nose, an elf. He's slow, so slow. He's Tim Conway's old man, itty bitty steps. I timed him once. Took eight minutes to get from the store to the car, another 5 minutes to actually open the door, get in, and buckle up. That's why I was so surprised when I heard Daddy carried the flag in our hometown Memorial Day Parade.

My hometown is so small, its not on a map. The Memorial Day Parade is the biggest thing going. Hawleyton is a wide place in the two lane road. The community is strong, been there 200 years, everybody's kin to everybody else.

Growing up, the whole town consisted of a gas station-junk yard, the firehall where I went to first grade, the Methodist Church my great grandparents helped build (their names are on the stained glass windows), a baseball field, around the corner past a few houses (where I can name who lived there for a couple of generations back), past the cemetery where my kinfolk are buried, then the Grange Hall, where there used to be dances and homemade entertainment.(Now converted to a private residence). The gas station-junk yard was bulldozed.

Every year, the Memorial Day Parade started at the firehall. The veterans gather, 4-H, Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts, and always kids on two-wheelers with noisemakers in the spokes. In the past, Aunt Kay and

her friends sometimes rode horses all decorated up. The horses and buggies always came last, just before the fire trucks.

They had special cars for Gold Star mothers. Grandma and Mrs. Jaycox got to ride in a red convertible one year. I thought that was wonderful, until I realized the price they paid for that honor. Now my sisters or their daughters lay the wreath. We don't forget.

Watching the veterans is always the best part. They lead the Parade, Old Glory waving proudly, marching from the fire hall, past the Methodist Church, around the corner, now, ending at the Hawleyton Cemetery, maybe half a mile. They aren't still the boys who went away. They are now the Daddies of all those 4-Hers, Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts. They are the preachers, teachers, milkmen, insurance salesmen. You might not know they were soldiers, except for this Parade.

Most Vets just wore the hats. They pull whatever part of the uniform they can still fit into out of the footlockers, clean 'em, polish the brass. Over all the years, the uniforms shrank. The pants, usually, were replaced by Sunday pants first. The shirts, valiantly stretching between buttonhole and buttons were next to quit. The hats will always fit.

Last Memorial Day, knowing I was missing all this, I called my hero. "Daddy, did you go to the Parade?"

"Oooh," he moaned, "He set a brutal pace."

"What are you talking about?" Daddy assumed I could read his mind.

"That young feller. He set a brutal pace. These old legs aren't what they used to be. Ooooh, ahhhh!" Dad moaned again.

"Do you need your medicine? What happened to you?" I was getting concerned. I'd forgotten his capacity for drama.

" The parade. " More moans. " I carried the flag. That durn thing is heavy. "



"Gosh! What an honor!" I saw in my mind the whole parade, the laying of the wreath, the whole community knowing and understanding the sacrifice made by my patriotic family. " How did you get to do that?"

"That young feller. He said I was the oldest Vet there, I should have the honor. Boy, he set a brutal pace. They

My Boyhood in Hawleyton

By Mike Griffin

set that harness on me, it wasn't too bad, but with every step, it got heavier. I wasn't sure I would make it. I couldn't let the flag touch the ground. Its a big flag, too. Hung over the Capital building in Washington. That young feller...."

"How old was he, Dad?" I pictured some strapping farm boy, fresh out of boot camp. I pictured Dad's short little legs, and that great big flag. I saw him struggling to keep up, the man who took 5 whole minutes to get strapped into the car.

"Well, I dunno. Korean War vet. Oooh! Cramp!"



"Korean War? Daddy, he must be at least 60!" Perspective, point of view. That's some older than I am, two decades

younger than Dad.

"Yeah, young feller. I did it, I carried the flag. It never touched the ground. couldn't let it be disgraced, all those fellers that died for that flag. Brutal pace, brutal pace....." Dad moaned, "Here's your mother....."

"Mom, did they really ask Dad to carry the flag? " I asked. Moans and groans in the background. Louder, since he was no longer next to the speaker.

"Yes, they did. And he won't ever do it again. But he was determined. He wouldn't let them down, wouldn't admit how he knew he'd pay for it tomorrow. Stubborn....."

Days later, thinking about the phone call, the parade I'd missed, Old Glory waving in the sun, the old men marching like the boys they were, and marching for those who didn't come home, I thought about the brutal pace that whole generation set. Especially my hero, Daddy.

He was married for 54+ years to the same woman, father of seven. He was a deacon in the church, even though many Sundays he snoozed through the sermon. He was forgiven, because for 36 years, he worked on a loading dock, hoisting 100 pound bags ten high, day after day.

When he retired, he worked another 14 years in a family-owned apple orchard. Every day, he kept a roof over our heads, food in our mouths and shoes on our feet.

He paid his bills, owned his home, and mowed the lawn. He and his whole generation are the everyday heroes of America. Every day. He set a brutal pace.

Part I: The year was 1970. Technically, chronologically, the 60's were over. Realistically, Vietnam, protests, the age of freedom and flower children were abound and the movement of liberation was still in full swing. But we didn't care, or even realize what was happening in the world. Even if we would have known, we had other priorities. You see, a bunch of nearly ten year old boys living out in the country (we didn't call it the "suburbs") had more important things to do.

Our dads were honorable men with high integrity. Our moms loved us and taught us about honesty, respect, being considerate of others and of course, fear of God, and of our parents' response if we failed to do those things. We didn't know which was worse, eternal damnation or the wrath of our parents. We just knew the later was a given, we weren't risking the former, and we knew neither would be a pretty sight. Our parents had rules (not guidelines... RULES!)

Our moms enforced them as much or more so than our dads. They were often more involved in our lives as our dads worked almost nonstop. If not at their grossly underpaid jobs for the demanding and often treacherous work they performed, but also around the house, fixing, designing, building, and rebuilding, then fixing things again. Something always needed to be modified or repaired, and we didn't have the money for professionals or contractors in most cases unless the well went dry and needed drilling or some complicated masonry work needed to be done like a fireplace and chimney. Even then, our dads wouldn't be happy with the work that was done and would mutter, "Should have done the darn thing myself," after paying out their hard earned money that had been saved for a short camping vacation.

So, they fixed their own washers and dryers, installed their own electrical outlets, did their own plumbing, carpentry and our moms helped



when two hands just weren't enough. We all knew to leave the house immediately whenever dad asked for help. Partly because it was a sure sign he was already angry because he couldn't complete the task by himself, partly because we knew that however mom tried to help, and whatever she did, it would be wrong, and mostly because he might actually ask one of us kids to help, so we were out of their like a flash and left our poor moms to the unenviable apprenticeship.

We knew dad would be yelling because she grabbed him the crescent wrench rather than a pipe wrench, even though all he said was “grab that adjustable wrench over there”. Of course both were adjustable, but moms were expected to intuitively know what our dads meant when they needed something, regardless of how vague the instructions were.



But through it all, they loved each other. Really, really loved one another in a way we later came to understand, appreciate and respect. It was a partnership. Not a perfect one, but a partnership. And if we crossed either one of them, we knew we would be facing both of them. It was a given. And looking back, it was the right thing for both of them to do.

Excerpts from the oral history of **Marjorie Walls Rowlands** compiled by **Joan Moseng**
“Farm Tools.”

The family had a standard size Farmall tractor which was small compared to today’s modern ones. The front had a double tire that served as one wheel. The two back wheels could be spread out for use in hilly places. Metal cleats were bolted so they could be replaced when worn out. There was no spare money during the 30’s and 40’s to purchase the luxury of a tractor umbrella. A straw hat would have to do.

The tractor had a place on back to power the hay mower. A flywheel on one side made it possible to operate a buzz saw to cut firewood. With the help of a belt, other machines could also be used such as a cement mixer. Concrete was used for new buildings, particularly foundations or floors in the barns.

Before the tractor, there was a “one-bottom” plow pulled by a horse. The tractor had a two bottom plow cutting the job in half. It also meant the farmer could ride the tractor and not tire so quickly.

There was also a dump rake and then a side-delivery rake. Carpentry tools were bought from a carpenter’s widow. Although very old, they were in excellent condition. These tools were kept in a large wooden trunk in the garage.

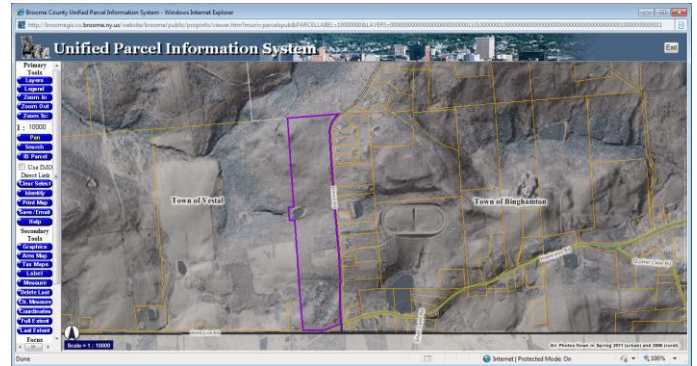
A table saw was bought and kept in the middle of the barn floor. In the “garage” a large grinding wheel was kept for sharpening tools that very likely came with the farm.

Our thanks to the Rev. Sidney Rowlands for turning Marjorie’s memoirs over to our historical society.

Mountain Top Grove

Esther Griffin with thanks to Margaret Hadsell

While Mountain Top Grove is technically in the Town of Vestal, we in Binghamton township have taken claim to it over the years. The 60.32 acre Mountain Top Grove is located at 539 Hance Road, Vestal, south of a parcel called Bear Swamp. It is a portion of Lot 4 in the east division of the Hammond’s Patent, running right along the Town of Binghamton border.



Town of Vestal Grove Town of Binghamton

Construction of the Grove began in 1929, under the Kane family who started the catering business. It was eventually sold to the Patricks, John of Binghamton and Joe and Steffie of the Reynolds Tract in Hawleyton. A look through the old newspapers in the web site Fulton History tells of hundreds, most likely thousands of clam bakes over the 83 years since it was established.

As a neighbor of Joe and Steffie Patrick, my memories are of countless times we attended reunions, wedding receptions, and other parties at the Grove. Their Manhattan clam chowder was without a doubt the best ever. Their clams were always clean and tender, and we were lucky enough to get some of the leftovers brought back to us by the Patricks. Joe and Steffie’s young daughter, Ginger, worked there opening clams like a pro and many of our other young people worked there. Besides the delicious and plentiful food offerings, games of horseshoes, sand volleyball, and dancing were enjoyed by all.

In September 1985, Mt. Top Grove, was sold to Timothy & Rosemary Dickerson of Dickerson Development LLC who now also operate the Grove.

Heirlooms

By Eleanor Shimer Brooks

As told to daughter, Janice Brooks Headrick)



Eleanor & Great Granddaughter, Ella, (Dau of Travis & Susan James, G'Dau of David & Nancy Brooks James)

“What is the oddest family heirloom?” I asked Mom, knowing it was a loaded question. She saves things. Often, objects bring back memories. Interviewing your own mother can be enlightening. Eleanor Shimer Brooks, now living in Vestal, was born in 1923, and lived most of her life in Hawleyton. She’s related by blood to many, and to more through lifelong friendships.

“Well, from my Mother (Hazel Webb Shimer) is a clock bracelet from Dr. Shaw. She was taking care of his children, and his son cut an artery on his wrist. She got that for saving his son’s life.” (My Mom still has it.) I explained that most things aren’t valued without their story, where they came from and why. Mom continued, “From my Grandmother, Martha Pierson Webb, I have her toy sad irons, and a ceramic pot. Oh, and there is the vinegar jug, its at Nancy’s. It was used for apple vinegar, to get the pectin to make jelly. The platter and soup tureen, it’s at Paula’s, its priceless. Well, to me. I had it priced years ago, and it’s probably twice that now. I hope it’s insured. The platter was used for a 24 lb turkey at Thanksgiving. At Christmas, Grandma Webb always roasted two full sized loins of pork. She got it from her mother, Ruth (Mrs. Isaac) Pierson. “

“Uncle Cleon butchered. It was too gruesome for us kids, but we’d sneak up into the hayloft to watch. There was Leland, Eleanor, Leatha, Winnie, you ask Doug. Uncle Cleon had a pig sticker. Hazel and Mattie (Martha) made head cheese. (I stuck my fingers in my ears, while she described the process of turning pig brains edible.) “We had big crocks, where we kept eggs all winter, soaked in salt peter.”

“At the farm, there was a wood stove in the front room. We had big metal wash tubs for baths, once a month. You got warm, but if you bent over, you might burn your butt.”

“They canned fruit, beef, chicken, mincemeat, crabapples for jelly. Bosc pears, they picked green, layered them in sawdust, up in the attic. Currents, too. Always hoped for no snakes in the bushes.”

Who planted the orchard? “I assume it was Isaac Pierson. To save the maples, the government gave them 50cents a tree.”

That afternoon, Doug Webb joined us on the patio. He confirmed all Mom said. “There was Stump Fence Rd. There were grape vines all over it. It ran between Axtel’s and Webb’s. We cut around behind it. Axtel’s had pasture,” Doug said “When Dad acquired the farm, there was a spring. Harold and I dug a trench, put a pipe across the road to the house. Now the town has filled it in. That was the best water in the world!”

GROVE SCHOOL “We’d go to Council Rock, or Table Rock,” Eleanor said, “I don’t know, maybe the Indians met there. We’d pick wintergreen, or huckleberries in the fall. We had fun!”

“There were some pranks. George Garrett was a big bruiser, but a scaredy-cat. One time Lenora and Dorothy Shurtleff rigged up a pail, and when he opened the door.....” Mom is laughing, still. She didn’t say what happened next, but, then, maybe she didn’t have to “ Dorothy was so skinny, tiny, she climbed under the teacher’s desk. It was on a pedestal, with a small door at the knee hole. Good hiding spot for her.”

“Another time, there was a big woodbox, to the right of the front door. Somebody put Mo and Helen in it. They couldn’t get out, too little.”

“The worst one? Oh, that! Our pencil sharpener was in the back of the room, hanging on the wall. It was the kind you put your pencil in, turned the crank to grind a new point. Two of the big boys, Tom Maxian, and the Pollack boy, don’t recall his first name, they put garlic cloves in it. When another student went to sharpen his pencil, the whole room smelled like garlic.”



NOTE: Mom’s nose snearled up like a window shade. “Couldn’t get the smell out, even when we scrubbed it! I think it was their last year at Grove School.” Mom still doesn’t like garlic, eighty years later.

Binghamton Township Historical Society
c/o Esther Pettengill
3639 Saddlemire Rd.
Binghamton, NY 13905



FIRST CLASS MAIL

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Please return to sender

As we read the item below, written in 1890, we realize this issue spans 122 years of living around our town and writing about it!

Notice to Readers: We welcome your suggestions, articles, and photos. We'll accept hand-written, though we prefer on-line submissions. We hesitate to use professional photos, especially recent ones as they may be copyrighted.

from Jan Feb Mar'05 NL (early BTHS Newsletter)

**Elizabeth Moses Eldred's
Description of Hawleyton –
written January 23, 1890**

Hawleyton is a pleasant little Hamlet, situated in a small valley surrounded by hills. A little stream flows through the place which courses its way on and empties into the Susquehanna River. The nearest railway station is at Binghamton, seven miles north of the place. Montrose is fifteen miles south and the Pennsylvania line is two and one half miles south. The village contains 16 dwelling houses, a M.E. Church, Post Office, School House, Blacksmith shop, two grocery stores, one hotel, Public and private hall, grist and saw mill.

The town officers living at or near Hawleyton:
Supervisor..... L.M. Blanding,
Road CommissionerT.W. Tripp,
Overseer of Poor.....Norman Meaker,
Assesor..... E.M.Jaycox.

Rev. T.H. Parsons is the Pastor in charge. The Village school is taught by Neal Finch with an attendance of about 43 scholars. (Ms. Eldred signs "Finis Elizabeth")

DOES ANY ONE ELSE REMEMBER?

1. Does anyone know why it is called, "Lucky Hill?" Eleanor Shimer Brooks gave the Maxian Road location. We wonder if someone found something lucky there?

