



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 3

JUL-AUG-SEPT 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

John R. Kilmer, Sr. of the Town of Binghamton passed away June 28, 2012 after a long illness. Born December 4, 1939 in the town of Binghamton, the son of the late Lillian and Roy Kilmer, John worked as a meat manager for the Giant markets for over thirty five years. Our condolences to his wife, Kathryn, their many children, grand and great grandchildren and his sister.

Nick DeBellis of Hawleyton died May 24th of cancer. He lost his son, Mark DeBellis previously and his parents, Joe and Angeline. Nick was an army veteran and a talented artist. Our sympathies to his wife, Marjorie and daughter, Bonnie.



Masu Gawlinski also of Hawleyton died May 28th. She left her son, Tony (and Colleen) and also her extended family of the DeBellis's. Masu loved to cook and enjoyed watching others eat her dinners. She is sorely missed by Tony, Colleen and others.



**We rushed this issue to honor
our country's birthday!**

THE BIG BANG

by Doug Webb



On the 4th of July in the 20s and 30s, Hawleyton had an annual old fashioned field day on Haskell's field. Events included sack races or three-legged races, egg tossing, men racing to dress in women's clothes, etc.

To start the day, Joe Jaycox and Floyd Gifford would get there early and set off a cannon (sadly, neither of them returned from WWII.) I was 9 or 10 years old at the time and according to my memory the cannon was about 3 feet long, 2 feet in diameter, and must have weighed a couple of hundred pounds. It had no wheels, but had a small hole for a fuse in the back. I got there early to watch. They buried it on the pitcher's mound pointing over the creek. After packing black powder or something in it, they put a fuse in the back. They yelled at me to go across the road, so I went over on the old church parsonage lawn to watch. They lit the fuse and ran for their lives. I think they used too much black powder because it made a very loud bang and came right out of the ground backwards. It skipped across the ballfield, up across the road and onto the lawn where I had been standing, and then came to rest under the old parsonage porch.

I don't remember anyone else around, but I would like to know if anyone else saw or remembers the event.

To Refresh our Memories of the Fourth of July and How it Started.

The actual date after the American Revolution that separated us, the 13 colonies, from Great Britain was July 2, 1776. It was on this date that the Second Continental Congress voted to approve the resolution of independence that had been proposed in June by Richard Henry Lee of Virginia. Congress then worked on a Declaration of Independence, which a committee of five had prepared.

Thomas Jefferson is credited as the main author. It took Congress two more days to revise and adopt the document so that it was not officially adopted until the 4th. John Adams wrote this letter to his wife, Abigail,

"The second day of July, 1776, will be the most memorable epoch in the history of America. I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary festival. It ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance, by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illuminations, from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward forever more."

July 4, 1776 is the official date the final Declaration of Independence was approved by Congress.



Would you believe, that both John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, the only signers of the Declaration of Independence to become Presidents of the USA, died on the same 4th of July in 1826 which was the 50th anniversary of the Declaration? A third President, James Monroe, died

John Adams on July 4, 1831, thus becoming the third president in a row to die on this date.

(Thanks for this information to the Internet Encyclopedia, WIKI.) Esther Griffin

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Cookbooks. We owe a big debt of gratitude to Mike Harris of **LONE MAPLE FARM**. He has been selling our cookbooks to a total of almost **\$300!!!** He has more and when you stop in for fresh produce and other delicacies there, pick one up for yourself or as a gift for someone. We still have about 70 cookbooks for sale. \$15 each, and all proceeds go into our Capital Improvements fund to help repair the raccoon damage. They are also available at the Town Hall, and from Esther Pettengill or Phyllis Hawley. Checks should be made payable to **Binghamton Township Historical Society**. They make great gifts!!!

Things are moving slowly but surely in our little museum. First, a **big thank you** to Virgil Washco for patching and painting some of the water-damaged plaster wall in the museum chapel. It is really looking nice!



An electrician has looked at the mess **upstairs** and is prepared to work with us to upgrade the lighting and other **electrical service** there, depending on his schedule (and our budget).

Activities: We held two open houses already this year: Heritage Weekend (May 19) and on May 28 after the Memorial Day Parade. A total of twenty-five people visited, bringing us closer to our goal of opening on a regular basis.

Tom Brusso's Cub Scout pack toured the museum on June 5. We hosted 17 boys along with their parents! There were so many people that we divided them into two groups. We developed interactive activities to pique their interest, helping them understand in a more personal way how their grandparents and great-grandparents managed without the conveniences we take for granted. (To a child, 50 years ago was the dark ages!)

Inventory of our artifacts is almost completely digitized (on the computer), making it much easier to keep track of our collection. When the electrical work is completed upstairs, we will begin to replace

the ceiling. We would like to finish some of the ceiling with Plexiglas so the unusual roof construction will be visible.

We have a DESPERATE need for more workers. If you can spare two or three hours to help us complete these projects, please call one of the officers to set that up. Many hands make light work. We are willing to work evenings or Saturdays if it is more convenient for you. Saturdays are best for upstairs, as there is no electric service up there yet.

Projects needing helpers

A few painters to paint the outside front of the church where the bare spots are. We have the paint and brushes. We just cannot manage the ladders, and the sheriff's weekenders cannot use ladders. It should only take a couple of hours to complete that project.



Helpers to clean upstairs. Requires dust mask, gloves, and stepladder. Screwdriver and pliers are also helpful.

Someone to grass-whip regularly around the building. The person who has been doing it suffers terribly from allergies and cannot handle it any longer.

##Our **Raccoon Rumble** fundraiser had to be postponed due to conflicting schedules and illnesses suffered by some of our participants. It will be rescheduled later, hopefully late summer or early fall.

Life members. During our roof fundraising, your officers determined that anyone who donated at least \$1,000 deserves a life membership. We appreciate your support! If you donated that much or more and are not designated as a life member on your address label, **PLEASE** let us know!



Memories of the Town of Binghamton

by Bill Haines



Although I'm in my early '60's, my memories of the Town of Binghamton are still very vivid. As a child of Bill and Town native Eleanor Maxian Haines, I would visit periodically either my grandmother Retha Eldred Maxian Milks in Hawleyton or her mother, Mary Wright Eldred on Ingraham Hill. "Gram" and "Gramps" (Charles Milks) lived in the little bungalow he built in 1955 on an acre of Saddlemire Road land he had bought from next door neighbors, Ed and Harriett Haskell.

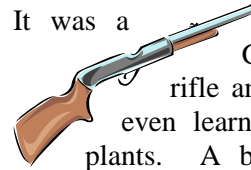
This was the "I Like Ike" era of the fifties. Living in the city of Binghamton was a little more pulsating, so riding a few minutes into the country for a small child was a big deal. Gram had a propensity for fast driving. As we flew up Pennsylvania Avenue at a caffeinated pace in her formidable Nash, the ride was always exciting and, to me, death defying.

A week end would consist of an early Friday evening arrival often topped off with five star fare of fresh vegetables from their sizeable garden, meat and assorted pies. Then Gramps would fire up his MacCarthuresque pipe with Prince Albert and we'd watch Don Dunphy narrate the fights. Later in the Friday TV night we'd take in the Life of Riley as I sat on his lap imitating him with my tobacco-less corn cob.

Saturday morning after Gram handed me some change, I would amble down Saddlemire Road to the little store below the Hawleyton Methodist

Church to buy assorted candy. Soon after I found my way back to the house in a diabetic shock.

It was a Tom Sawyer childhood with Gramps teaching me how to shoot a rifle and fish for sunnies and bullheads; I even learned to hunt for cattails and edible plants. A black and white snapshot captures Gramps adjusting his 22 rifle sight as I looked into it with my Vitalis Elvis pompadour. The Brownie snapshot exemplifies that good time era.



I was allowed a sense of independence as I strolled along Little Snake Creek which ran east beneath the steep bank at the back of their property and past the adjacent cemetery and Grange Hall.

My great grandmother Mary Eldred, widow of Steve, lived in a two-story wood house at the top of Ingraham Hill just west of the Ingraham Hill cemetery. Across the road stood a large barn with a hayloft and stalls for cows and horses. A fenced lane to the pasture separated the barn from a pig pen. Next to the farm house was a garage with serious tools, a motorized saw for cutting fire wood, and a threadbare leather buggy. Just north of the house was a chicken coop which, like the roof of the garage, had been built by her son Bill with unused 1929 New York State license plates. The wandering, free range chickens were ahead of their time.

Grandma Eldred was very self sufficient. She churned butter and canned vegetables and meat. Two wood burning stoves—kitchen and living room—served her needs, one heating the house and the other for cooking and baking. At meal time, a thin roll of fly paper displayed directly above the food was somewhat disconcerting as we feasted on the culinary delights at her kitchen table.

My younger brother Tom and other friends joined me in my pre-teens on farm visits. We would take hay rides with Grandma Eldred's nephew Ken Wright. He catered to our every whim, including rolling us an occasional cigarette on his little rubber roller machine. We kids had an incredible view when camping on layers of moss. Giant TV transmitters close by provided a panoramic, sci-fi view of the vivid constellations. The flashing towers offset the rustic farm, creating a Twilight Zone back drop for us to scare ourselves to sleep with horror stories.



Huck Finn had nothing on me!

Drovers Inn Lives On

By Margaret Hadsell - July 2012

Originally part of Wilson's Patent in 1795, land agent Arthur Gray sold 245 acres for \$2,475 to Jacob and Jonathon Crane and Gozen Winants (Winans) in 1805. The property contained a saw mill, mill pond and mill brook. Crane operated a ferry across the Susquehanna, joining the two parts of the Town of Union. Land values were increasing rapidly and twelve years later in 1817, Thomas G. Waterman sold 12 acres by the road leading to the ferry to John Dunbar for \$1200.

Jacob Rounds bought the 7-acre triangle between the Susquehanna River and the ferry road from John Dunbar for \$600 in 1821. The land included the Dunbar Tavern Stand which became the Rounds Turnpike Tavern where the first town meeting of the newly formed Town of Vestal was held on February 11, 1823.

Jacob's holdings increased to 32 acres, extending from the Susquehanna to Front Street, with the purchase of an additional 25 acres in 1825. A small family cemetery on Front Street was established and Jacob was the first interment when he died in 1833 at the age of 42.

Sons John D. and Jacob L. Rounds hired carpenter Ransom Baty, Sr. in 1844 to build the Drovers Inn which replaced the former Rounds Turnpike Tavern. Drovers opened in March 1845, on James Polk's inauguration, with a Polka ball in the second floor ballroom. Drovers was the last stop for livestock drovers before crossing the Susquehanna at Rounds' Ferry, formerly Crane's Ferry. Used as both a home and inn until 1855, Jacob and his new bride Susan Crandall, converted Drovers into a private residence making four bedrooms of the former ballroom, and a living room where thirsty travelers once stood at the bar. After Jacob and Susan died in 1886 and 1897 respectively, it became the home of Herbert and Susan Rounds Harris until her death in 1931 when it was sold to the Claude H. Ackley Funeral Home. It lived on as a convalescent home and apartments. Demolition threatened its existence first for a recreational vehicles display building and later when the Route

17 Expressway was being planned. The stately building was saved yet again, this time in 1987 by William and Linda Brock who restored the Inn to the mid-1880s look while converting it to the Le Chalet Restaurant. The Plantation House Restaurant occupied the building in 2002, and today it is the home of Prestige Family Images.

The Drovers was designated a local historic landmark and placed on both the New York State and National Registers in 2010 along with the Fayette L. Rounds home across Pumhouse Road.

This poignant photo and poem by Esther Griffin honoring the 168 year old building was a gift to the Town Historian's office. Its plea for rescuing the building was answered.

The Drovers Inn



The sun sparkles this ancient building
Where ghosts of drovers linger.
From farm to market, miles they trudged
Driving their cattle until, wearied,
They found rest at the Drovers Inn.

When trains and trucks
Relieved their arduous journeys,
Its beauty enhanced a Funeral Parlor,
A Nursing Home, Apartments.
In elegant restaurants
The ghosts then danced.
A touch of Southern Plantation,
Then taste of France.

Now abandoned yet again,
The ghosts wander its halls.
Lonely, worried, on the brink of oblivion,
The mansion begs for rescue,
A detour from this Dead End.

OUR LANDMARK:

Old Hawleyton Methodist Episcopal Church & Fellowship Hall

(the sole officially designated historic site in the Town of Binghamton)

Excerpts from BTHS application for Historic Site Designation, granted by New York State and US Dept of the Interior in 2006.

The Old Hawleyton Methodist Episcopal church is significant as a distinctive example of nineteenth-century ecclesiastical architecture and for its long role in the religious and social life of the hamlet of Hawleyton. Settled in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries by New Englanders, the small hamlet of Hawleyton is located in southern Broome County near the Pennsylvania state line. Its most prominent citizens, the Hawleys, included Martin Hawley, who purchased more than 2,000 acres in 1829 and farmed between 1836 and 1839, and his son James, who owned and operated a mill, built a large residence, and donated land and money for the construction of a Methodist church. The church was constructed by Edwin Stearns, a local builder, with assistance from residents, who selected and cut timber and constructed the original pews.

As built in 1856-57, the small, rectangular wood-frame building was characterized by a steep gable roof with deeply overhanging eaves, narrow lancet-arched windows, a clearly defined chancel, and decorative ribs suggesting an exposed framing system. The choice of the rural Gothic Revival style, which was reinforced by the design of the church pews and other furniture, was unusual for a Methodist congregation in this era and may reflect Hawley's or the builder's familiarity with the work of Richard Upjohn, whose book, *Rural Architecture*, had been published in 1852.

In 1877 the church was remodeled. While the addition of a square, engaged entrance tower with portico clearly continued the Gothic theme, interior changes appeared to be a response to changes in Protestant church liturgy typical of the post-Civil War period. These include the enclosure of the chancel and the re-use of this space for a classroom and pastor's study, the expansion of the platform, and the replacement of the original pulpit with a new platform pulpit.

Another restoration/remodeling program, led by Pastor Theodore Hubbard, was initiated in 1941 and the church was once again altered. The original windows were

replaced with stained glass, new wainscoting was applied over the original beaded-board siding on the lower walls, and new pews were purchased. Other changes included plastering and painting plus the addition of hardwood floors and a curved communion rail with cup holders.

The attached fellowship hall was constructed in two phases between 1950 and 1954, replacing the 1913 addition from the demolished Brackneyville sister-church. The two-story wood-frame building features a large assembly hall, classrooms formerly used by the church for religious education, and a kitchen.

In 1967, the Hawleyton congregation announced plans to construct a new, larger building to accommodate its current ministry. Plans to demolish the original church met with dismay from local citizens beyond the Methodist community because the church was widely regarded as the social center of the town and it had served as the focal point of numerous and varied community events, including dinners, field days, meetings of local organizations and venues for children's activities. Fortunately, motivated in part by the public outcry, the congregation constructed the new building south of the original one and the historic church was preserved. However, without a use, the older building sat vacant for eighteen years.

In 1985, the church reached an agreement with the (*recently formed*) Binghamton Township Historical Society to preserve the old building as a museum and a repository for the town's archives.

Finally, in 1989, the church was restored once again by members of the historical society. This time, major changes included repair of the cut stone steps, removal of the 1940's wainscoting and restoration of the earlier beaded-board paneling, and repainting.

The Old Hawleyton Methodist Church has played a continuing role in the history of the hamlet of Hawleyton. Despite the removal of its pews, the church retains substantial integrity from its construction period; at the same time, the building's alterations document changes in liturgy and taste over its long period of significance.





Civil War Veterans buried in Ingraham Hill Cemetery
Taken from Ingraham Hill Cemetery records 1/29/2012 compiled by Margaret Hadsell, Town of Vestal Historian (and current resident of Town of Binghamton)

Information from gravestones of CIVIL WAR VETERANS buried at Hawleyton Cemetery
Compiled by Judy A. Zurenda, Town of Binghamton Historian - July 4, 2012

ALEXANDER CARMAN
 1835-1900 CO A, 197 REGT, NY VOL INF

JOSEPH SANFORD CARMAN
 1829 – 4/9/1880 VOL IN, CO D, 109 REGT

JOEL S GAGE
 1834 – 1908 137 REGT

JAMES W KIRBY
 1822 – 1902 CO G, 89 REGT, NY VOL INF

JOHN C JONES
 1844 – 1892 CO K, 52 REGT, PA VOL

ANDREW MEAKER
 1842 – 1912 CO K, 89 NY INF VOL

JOHN MOSES
 1834 – 1911 SERGT CO D, 6 NY, H ART'Y

GEORGE L. PARSONS
 1842 – 1/ NY S VOL IN, CO D, 109 REGT
 (George was from Conklin Forks and died in Libby Prison at the age of 23)

ELIAS PRENTICE
 4/1/1841 – 2/9/1897 PVT CO E, 109 NY INF

GILBERT H THOMPSON
 1828 – 1883 PVT CO A, 56 PA INF

ABIAL TRIPP
 1811 – 4/17/1890

EDGAR WOOLSEY
 1835 – 3/19/1886 PVT CO E, 109 NY INF



<u>Name</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>DOD</u>
<u>CIVIL WAR SERVICE</u> (on grave stone)		
BROWN, W. H.		Co. G. 143 NY Inf.
BUTLER, JOEL	83Y	1896 Mar 30
NYS Vol. 137 Regt GAR		
ELDRED, LUTHER H.	67 Y	1894 Sept 11
NYS Vol, Co. H 143 rd Regt		
LANDON, J.H.		1866 Mar 30
Co. K 179 th NY Inf. GAR		
NO NAME		1889 Jun 12
Veteran GAR		
NO NAME		
GAR Marker		
STRAITE, SAMUEL		1896
Co. C. 137 NY Vol. GAR		
UNKNOWN		
GAR Marker and Flag Symbol		
VAN SCHOOTER, RICHARD	65 Y	1891
Jun 12 Co. I 50 th Eng, NYS GAR		
VAN SCHOOTER, UNKNOWN	59 Y	1891 Jun 11
Co. I 50 th Eng, NYS GAR		

Binghamton Twnshp Historical Soc.
c/o Esther Pettingill
3639 Saddlemire Rd.
Binghamton, NY 13903

We hope you had a good Fourth of July!



Dues are due in September. Check the expiration date on your address label on this newsletter for the date your membership expires.

Look inside for flyer on our annual meeting!

Annual meeting ("Remembering When") will be Saturday, September 15. See newsletter insert for more information

Our Town's Irish



Readers who enjoyed **Genny Giblin Sullivan's** article on the Town's Irish in our 1st quarter '12 NL, may find the following quote interesting.

Interviewed by Dan O'Neill in 1978, Town resident originally from Ireland, Elizabeth Tice said: "When (husband) John and I used to talk about it, John said nearly every Irishman that ever came to Binghamton went out to Silver Lake."

FIRST CLASS

POSTMASTER: If undeliverable as addressed, please return to sender.

This quote is from Volume #7 of 8 bound volumes of oral histories of Broome County elders interviewed by 5 older workers in 1978. Their transcripts of more than 80 verbatim interviews produced in these books are available for the public in the genealogy section, 2nd floor of the Broome County Public Library. Broome County Office for Aging, their employer, received a national award for this Senior Community Service project, supervised by Josiah T. Newcomb, a board member of Action for Older Persons.

