

Historical Highlights

Sand Lake Historical Society

Volume 22, No. 3

Spring 1996

Supervisors of the Town of Sand Lake

The Cipperly Family

By Bob Lilly

This is the first of a series of articles on the Supervisors of the Town of Sand Lake. In addition this is a short description of some early settlers of the Town of Sand Lake that lead into the story. It is the result of a study on the supervisors made by members of the Society over the past two years.

What better place to begin than with a family that was one of the earliest pioneers in the area that we now call Sand Lake. The Cipperlys presented the Town with four Supervisors, all named George. Until 1989 Thomas Cipperly was a member of the School Board. Why is he not named George?

In the late 1690s and early 1700s there were troubles in the Palatine area of Germany, around Saarbrucken. The area had been overrun and invaded by the armies of the hundred year war, and excessively high taxes were levied. Finally, the severe winter of 1708 ruined most of their vineyard. As a result the Palatines, about 3000 strong, left their homeland, traveling down the Rhine to Rotterdam, Holland. There they crowded into vessels which were to take them to England. Arriving at St. Catherine, Walworth, or Debford, they must have experienced the horrors of camps in England, where disease and death rapidly diminished the numbers of these poor people.

Early in 1710 the Palatines once again boarded vessels, this time bound for New York. It was a rough voyage: the ships were tossed about on the angry waves of the Atlantic for many weeks, as strong winds separated and scattered the ships in this little fleet. They were also ravaged by contagious diseases, which took 470 of their members on the way over and 250 more soon after arrival at New York in June and July 1710. Many were sent to East Camp — near Germantown, NY — and placed in the Queensberg settlement.

Each family was given 40 acres of land to clear and cultivate and they built crude huts to shelter their families. To pay for their passage from England, they were to be required to manufacture naval supplies by cutting pine trees and make them into turpentine and tar.

After five years, their debt being paid, the Palatines were free to resettle. Many moved on to Rhinebeck, Dutchess County, and years later to the Sand Lake area. Among the names of these 1710 settlers are many that show up in our Supervisor study: Barrent Zipperly (Sipperly, Cipperly), whose ancestors moved to Rensselaer County; Matthias Kuntz (Koons, Coons), whose great-grandson Solyman Coons became a supervisor in 1846; Bensteel (Bonesteel), Supervisor in 1874. There was a Rykert who, in the early 1800s, had a farm on today's Reichard's Lake. There are many families of today's Town of Sand Lake that could trace their ancestors back to those eventful trials of 1710.

Why and how they found their way to Sand Lake and Rensselaer County can be based on events of the time. Stephen Van Rensselaer III was educated by his grandfather Philip Livingston. His wife was Margaret Schuyler and his brother-in-law Alexander Hamilton — an illustrious heritage. On November 1, 1785, Stephen Van Rensselaer III came of age and became the Patroon of the Manor of Rensselaerwyck. With the help of Alexander Hamilton, he made plans to develop and populate the vast land holdings of the Manor. Handbills were distributed announcing that the Patroon would give to the Patriots of the Revolution homesteads without cost. Only after the farms became productive would he ask for any compensation.

In 1788, Evert Van Allen and Job Gilbert were commissioned to survey the manor and divide it into

120-acre farms. The conditions of the grants stated that a farmer find a location, clear it and build a dwelling and occupy it for seven years free. At the end of this time, they were to come to the Manor office and receive a durable lease. There was an influx of settlers into Rensselaerwyck after the Revolution due to these inducements. This is borne out by checking the dates of the original deeds, usually beginning at 1790. (These deeds led to the troubling rent war of 1834 and on. But that is a different story; read Henry Christman's *Tin Horns and Calico*).

Barrent Zipperly was among those who arrived in America in 1710 and settled in West Camp, now Germantown. In 1711, he married Anna Mariah Rykert. A blacksmith by trade, he later moved to Rhinebeck.

Joseph Hendrick Sipperly (1743-1791), a grandson of Barrent, was in the Revolutionary War and fought in the Battle of Saratoga. He settled in Rensselaerwyck around the end of the war. Also a blacksmith, he is credited with making the first iron tire for wagon wheels, welding an iron hoop and placing it on the wooden wheel while still red hot and letting it shrink onto the wheel. Before that the tire consisted of a number of pieces of flat iron bent and nailed onto the wheel.

Joseph Hendrick settled on a 271-acre farm in today's West Sand Lake. Upon his death in 1791, his farm was divided between his two sons: George H. Sipperly (1775-1847) and Hendrick Sipperly (1768-1826). The farm also contained a saw mill privilege at the time operated by Fonda and DeFreest.

Hendrick died in 1826, and the farm was divided among his four sons: George (1797-1877); Henry (1803-1860); Michael (1802-1882); and Nicholas (1805-1857).

The first George Sipperly (1775-1847) to become a Town Supervisor was the son of Joseph Hendrick Sipperly and was born on June 17, 1775, in West Sand Lake. He carried on the family occupation of blacksmith and farming. George also operated the saw mill and in 1829 became a charter member of the Wynantskill Association, an organization of mill owners with mills on the Wynantskill, interested in controlling the flow of the stream for hydraulic purposes.

On October 13, 1796, George married Mary (Maria or Polly) Coons and raised a family of 17 children, all of whom reached maturity. George Sipperly died November 11, 1847, leaving the farm to his son Jacob.

The second George Cipperly (1797-1877) to become Supervisor was the grandson of Joseph Hen-

drick Sipperly, the son of Henry Cipperly (1768-1826) and a nephew of George Sipperly who was supervisor in 1823. (Note that here is where the spelling of the name changed. In the records the first George is Sipperly; the second Supervisor is Cipperly). He was born June 17, 1775, in West Sand Lake. He married Laney Cronkite (1801-1855). They operated a farm and saw mill. He was the treasurer of the Anti-Rent Association, an organization opposed to the Van Rensselaers' rents, and ran into trouble when the Van Rensselaers threatened to remove the dam at his factory. George died on May 30, 1877.

The third George Cipperly (1805-1875) to become supervisor was born on November 11, 1805. The son of George (Town Supervisor in 1823) and Mary Coons Cipperly. He lived in West Sand Lake for his entire life. George operated the sawmill that was originally operated as the Fonda and Cipperly sawmill of 1788. Later he added a cloth dressing mill, which in 1865 was sold to John Akin to become the Akin, McLaren hosiery factory.

Mr. Cipperly was also involved in the "Anti-Rent Wars" of that period, acting as treasure of the Anti-Rent Association. At one time William Van Rensselaer threatened to destroy the dam at the mill site if he did not settle his account.

George Cipperly married Sally Ann Terry; they had five children. He died August 21, 1875.

The final George Cipperly (1873-1964) was a carpenter and built houses in West Sand Lake area. He lived in the white house on the corner of Route 43 and Reichard's Lake Road (Route 351). He was also an auctioneer, known for his integrity and his wonderful sense of humor. In addition he worked as a conductor on the Troy & New England Railway. George Cipperly was married to Martha Shants.

So we can see that the Cipperly family that came to the area before the Town of Sand Lake was established, were instrumental in the development of the Town, and to this day are still active. **A**

References: *Koon and Coons Families of Eastern New York*; *Cipperly Genealogy of the Cipperly Family*, Furnished by Mig Cipperly; *Emigrants from the Palatinate to America*, by F Krebs.

Nominating Committee news

This year there are several vacancies on that board of trustees that have to be filled. The nominating committee — Alan Fuess, John Allendorph, Linda Ormsby, Marge Larsen and Dianne Freeman — has come up with an outstanding slate and present the following names for considerations: *Marion Hacker, Arthea Gibbs, Andrew Mace, John Kacharian and Barbara Mohan.*



From the President

Dear SLHS Friends,

This is my "swan letter" as President. Thank you for the privilege of serving the Sand Lake Historical Society in this capacity for the past two years. The President has the opportunity to feel the pulse of interests and activities at every level of historic preservation and education, from the neighborhood right up to the National Trust for Historic Preservation. With all the wonderful information, contacts and opportunities that arrive in the mail from far and near, the best are right here at home — this community, you folks, our shared interest in local history.

For relative newcomers to the community, like our family, the participation in preservation and educational activities is motivated by the spirit and satisfaction of discovery. Working together in this way has nurtured a real kinship with Sand Lake and Sand Lakers, but especially with those of you who have given me, the Board of Trustees, the membership and historic preservation dedicated service. More than that, I have prized the friendships.

The door is open for you to share in the same experience. If you haven't already stepped inside and taken an active role in one of our projects, on a committee or on the Board of Trustees, "raise your hand" and find out what I'm talking about. Whether you are a new resident or a long-time resident, new member or charter member, let the Society fill a niche in your life.

On May 5, let's celebrate the efforts of the past year and offer our newly elected Trustees warm support and inspiration for the coming year. Join us for a delicious dinner and program, to be held in a one-time schoolhouse. [See p. 3.] We'll learn more together about the history of our schools from our speaker and from one another. We're indebted to the members of the American Legion Post for the use of the old school for our meeting and for providing the delicious barbecued chicken.

See you there!

Dianne Freeman

Town Historian appointed

Help Wanted — Town Historian. Attributes: historic preservation, research, writing, public presentation, organization, advocacy....

A member of the Sand Lake Historical Society has been appointed to the position of Sand Lake Town Historian. On January 2, Town Supervisor Fred Wurtemberger appointed Mary French as the new Town Historian after interviewing a number of candidates.

Mary is a lifelong resident of Rensselaer County, being born in Troy and living in the Town of Sand Lake since 1960. She attended Troy High School and is a graduate of Union University School on Nursing, with a Bachelor of Science Degree. In addition Mary has a Master of Science in Education from the College of St. Rose.

In addition to membership in our society, Mrs. French is a member of the Poestenkill Historical Society and the Early American Industries Association.

We all wish Mary luck in this new venture and look forward to working with her on the many projects of town history.

Annual Dinner Meeting May 5



The Annual Dinner Meeting will be held on Sunday, May 5, 1996, in the original Averill Park District School #7. This is a fitting location since the society is now engaged in a study of

the schools in Sand Lake from 1813 on. We will have a member of the Averill Park School District as a guest speaker.

The Sgt. Walter Adams American Legion Post, the present owners of the old schoolhouse, will serve a grilled chicken dinner with all the trimmings. A program on the school's history and the election of the new Trustees will take place after the dinner.

Make your reservations early. The cost is \$12 per person. [See the reservation and membership renewal form included in this newsletter.] The event starts with a social hour at 3:00 p.m.; dinner is at 4:00 p.m.



Upcoming Meeting Programs

Meetings are at 8:00 p.m. at the Sand Lake Town Hall, unless otherwise noted.

APRIL 9: Members of the Troy Stamp Club will present a program on United States Stamps commemorating events in New York State history. This is a different approach to local history and should be very interesting.

MAY 5: Annual dinner meeting at a former district schoolhouse. [see p. 3.]

JUNE 11: Our own John Allendorph will give a talk on the Troy and Greenbush Rail Road, a six-mile railroad entirely within Rensselaer County dating back to 1840.



**Miller School
District #9
One-Room Schoolhouse
Sand Lake, New York**

Miller School District #9 was located about two miles east of the Town of Sand Lake traveling up the Taborton Mountain.

The school averaged in size 48' x 36'. The entryway was used for the supply of wood for the potbelly stove, which stood in the center of the room. There were approximately four rows of desks, with five desks in each row. Two students sat at each desk. The desks and seats were anchored to the floor with the desk part fastened to the seat of the person in front of you. The top part of the desk was for writing; underneath was room for keeping books and pads. Students used tablets for writing. All desks had an ink well. Pencils and straight pens were used.

An older student was hired at \$30 a year to do janitor work. He would arrive early, sweep the floor, clean the blackboards, put the flag on the flagpole and get drinking water from a nearby spring. This water was kept in a large crock. A long-handle dipper was used by the entire school for drinking.

Students walked to school from surrounding homes. The average number of students ranged from 20-35.

To begin the day, the teacher would appear in the doorway of the school and ring a bell. Time ranged from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Each day began with the salute to the flag, followed by one of the following songs: *My County 'Tis of Thee*, *Home Sweet Home*, *The Star Spangled Banner*.

Grades ranged from 1st to 8th grade, with approximately four or five students in each grade. Students began school at different ages: 5, 7 and 8. The following subjects were taught on a daily basis: English, Arithmetic, Geography, History and Spelling. Reading, Writing, Drawing and Physiology were taught once or twice a week.

Students were often called to do work on the blackboard. The teacher called each grade up to her desk for teaching each subject. The teacher used the blackboard for writing subject matter, tests, etc. Books were handed down from generation to generation — grade by grade. Spelling bees were held, usually for the whole school.

Coats and jackets were hung on hooks about the room. Each student brought their own lunch in a small pail, lunch box or paper bag.

Two toilets were provided beyond the building — one for girls and one for boys. Sears, Roebuck catalogs were used for toilet paper. There was no facility for washing your hands — no towel or wash basin.

Dr. Reichard from the Sand Lake/Averill Park area came once a year and examined each student. He checked for deformities (structure), tested hearing with a bell with different tones — which tone was louder, and used an eye chart to check eyes.

G. Everett Patrie, Superintendent of Schools, visited each month to check the attendance register, etc.

Any student taking a Regents exam had to go to the school in Averill Park to take the exam.

For punishment, you were kept in from recess or after school or a note was sent home to the parents.


The year began in September and ended in June without a Christmas or Easter recess. Every day there was a 15-minute recess in the morning and one in the afternoon, with an hour for lunch.

Names of some of the teachers:

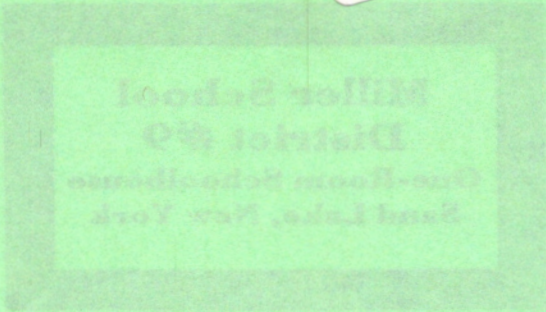
Ruby Coons
Marjorie Roberts
Fannie Coons
Mr. Murphy
*Octa Peck Houser**
Emma (Shier) Brown
Annetta Martin.

Teachers from any distance from the school often boarded with Mrs. Elizabeth Reincke, who lived a short distance from the school.

In 1929, the Averill Park Central School was built, housing grades from Kindergarten through high school. Students who had attended Miller School District #9 and #11 were bussed to the new Central School. — *Iona G. Mosher, October 1995*

* *Octa Peck Houser was from the Town of Poestenkill and came to school by horse and buggy.* 





...Class and desks were hung on hooks about the
walls. Each student brought their own book in a small
bag, hung on a nail.
Two desks were provided around the building -
one for girls and one for boys. Books, catalogs
were used for table paper. There was no table for
writing your name - as usual in work books.
The building from the Sand Lake School, New York
taken over a year and converted each student. He
checked the desks for furniture. Each desk had
a full with different sizes - which was used
and used an eye chart to check eyes.
In 1900 the Superintendent of Schools, James
each month to check the attendance register, etc.
Any student having a religious belief had to go to the
school in order to take the exam.
For transportation, you were left in your house or
left school or a bus was sent home to the parents.
The year began in September and ended in June
without a Christmas or winter vacation. There

Miller School District #9 was located about two
miles east of the Town of Sand Lake, traveling up the
Tribune Road.
The school averaged in size 25-30. The entryway
was used for the supply of wood for the building stove.
which stood in the center of the room. There were
approximately four rows of desks, with two desks in
each row. Two students sat at each desk. The desks had
drawers were attached to the floor with the desk part
fastened to the wall of the house in front of you. The
top part of the desk was for writing, underneath was
space for books and papers. Students used papers
for writing. All desks had an ink well, pencil and
straight edge very good.
An older student was paid at \$20 a year to do
house work. He would make water sweep the floor,
clean the blackboards and the flag on the flagpole and
the drinking water tank a nearby tower. The water
was kept in a large tank. A long handle dipper was
used by the entire school for drinking.

FORWARDING/ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED
Sand Lake Historical Society
POB 492
West Sand Lake, NY 12196

Historical Highlights
Bob Lilly, Editor
Andrew Mace, Publisher

Supkis, Stanley & Rosemary 95-96
RR 3 Box 439
Averill Park, NY 12018



FIRST CLASS MAIL