

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed it is the only thing that ever has." -Margaret Mead

PATHWAYS

VOL 15 NO 1

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MENDON FOUNDATION

SPRING 2008

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*The old Foggy Bottom's antique railroad cart donated to the Mendon Foundation by Rosita Caridi-Miller.
See article on page 6*

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MENDON ROADS AND EARLY TRANSPORTATION • 2ND ANNUAL PLANT SALE
TRAIL NEWS AND VIEWS

Migration to Mendon

How did our earliest settlers get to Mendon? Why did they come here?



by Diane Hamm

The first roads west from the Atlantic Ocean were the natural waterways. Before the Native Americans set foot on our soil, wild animals made trails along these waterways—the lakes, rivers and streams. Our Native Americans eventually used these same trails because they led to salt licks and other places where water, food and materials could be found for making clothing. These trails followed the lines of least resistance—a most valuable feature for future travel. In selecting these trails, the natives avoided rough, stony ground and dense undergrowth, if possible. Our early settlers eventually followed these trails in the late 1700s, but they had to be widened to allow the passage of the packhorse, and later, the wagon. There were two trails across the state of New York—the Mohawk Trail and the Great Western Turnpike.

The Mohawk River Valley was the primary route west through eastern and central New York. The Mohawk Trail followed the Mohawk River for about 100 miles. It was also known as the Iroquois Trail and traversed ter-

ritory once occupied by the Iroquois Confederacy. The Mohawk River's headwaters were at Oneida Lake.

From 1770 the Mohawk Trail was a wagon trail. Pockets of settlement were built along the Mohawk River leading into western New York: Albany, Schenectady, Rome, and Utica. At Utica the road forked toward the south and was known at that point as the Great Genesee Road. This road went to the Genesee River and on to Ft. Niagara, which was approximately 195 miles. It became a stagecoach route in 1804 and was opened from Albany to Auburn. West of Waterloo, the trail followed what is now US 20 through Geneva, Canandaigua, Lima, Batavia and on to Lake Erie.

Canandaigua was located on the north end of Canandaigua Lake. It was built up on the site of a Seneca Indian village which was destroyed by General John Sullivan in 1779. After the revolutionary war, the whole western part of New York, centered on the Mohawk Trail, was opened to settlement. The remaining Iroquois were

forced out and pushed into small reservations. The new government held 18 million acres of land taken from the Iroquois. Out of this, a military tract of over 1.5 million acres was set aside in the Finger Lakes area for war veterans, who had been promised free land for their services. Some families moved into the area immediately, not waiting for the legal right to do so. Many more waited until 1790, when the townships were laid out and named. At that time, lots were awarded to veterans or to those who had bought veteran's rights.

After purchasing from Massachusetts all of New York State west of Geneva, Oliver Phelps and Nathaniel Gorham appointed William Walker as their agent. He opened the first office for land sales in America in Canandaigua. The first party of settlers to Western New York was led by General Israel Chapin. They arrived in May 1789, and within two years the town was overrun with emigrants from New England who were moving west over the Great Western Turnpike and the Great Genesee Road.

After settlement of a dispute between New York and Massachusetts over ownership, the rest of the land westward from the Finger Lakes to Lake Erie was also opened up for settlement. Much of the land was bought by investment companies, including the Holland Land Company, which bought up the fertile Genesee Valley.

It was a rather long trip across the state of New York in early days. There were many problems that settlers faced as they plodded across the state to their chosen new home. They were only able to travel about 25 miles in a day. Often times, wagons got bogged down on muddy, rutty

roads. Food ran short. Before the trails were crowded with settlers moving west, families were often attacked by wild animals. Sometimes their horses were killed. Sometimes they were attacked by Indians on the war path.

If these early trails crossed a major waterway, they would not have been passable during all seasons of the year. Thus, many pioneers preferred to travel in the winter which enabled them to cross rivers, swamps, etc. Heavy wagon loads of personal belongings could be moved more easily on runners over the frozen ground. In the spring, wagons tended to get mired in the swampy areas and were difficult to pull over the rutted or often rocky trails.

According to Candace Beach, in her diary written in 1815, she tells that it took her family fifteen days to move their belongings from Hartland, CT to Leroy, NY. Her description about their trip is interesting:

Monday, August 14, 1815: This day I shall leave the place where I spent my youthful days to go among strangers. May we be prospered in our journey and be contented with our new home. Monday eve: Our friends have been very kind today, they "shewed" themselves friends. They accompanied us about eight miles on our journey and bade us adieu perhaps forever. We have rode 27 miles today and put up at Bards Tavern in Becket.

Saturday, Aug. 19th: We came through Little Falls, a beautiful village, and Herkimer, the most beautiful village that I ever beheld, the houses principally white and most beautiful shade trees. Farmington (CT) is nothing compared to this place of beauty.

Wed., Aug. 23rd: We rode 25 miles today through the Indian Village. Some were dressed very handsome in their fashion and some of them were almost naked.

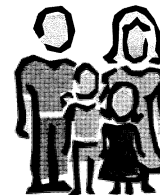
Friday, 26th: We crossed the Cayuga Bridge, which is quite a curiosity being one mile and a half in length.

Sat., 27th: This morning we arrived at our home (at LeRoy) and a good one, I believe. The family that we bought of have not moved out of the house yet. Mrs. Binson has a young babe. I feel very lonesome not being acquainted here."

These words could have been written by hundreds of women as this same pattern was repeated over and over again in the next several decades. There was great sadness experienced in leaving home and friends, the pleasure of finding attractive established villages in unknown land or the sudden realization at the end of the journey that the emigrant was alone in a completely new and untried environment.

Mendon's first settlers arrived in 1791. There were only about 20 families by 1795. By 1820, our population was 1,435. These settlers moving to Mendon would have traveled on whatever trail took them to Albany. From Albany, their trail overland would have passed through Schenectady, Rome, Utica, Auburn, Waterloo, Geneva, Canandaigua, East Bloomfield, and then north to Mendon and Norton's Mills. In spite of everything, most families reached their chosen destination in New York State successfully. By hard work they prospered, developing their new homeland into a worthy heritage for the coming generations. (More about early settlements of E. Mendon and Norton's Mills (Honeoye Falls) in the next issue of "Pathways").

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Honeoye Falls-Lima School District Hosts 4th Annual Earth Day Celebration

By Michele Shone
and Charlie Johnson

The 4th annual Earth Day celebration at Honeoye Falls-Lima Schools is scheduled for Thursday, April 10th. The Mendon Foundation's Education Committee, in conjunction with the Honeoye Falls-Lima School District and Manor School PTA, are sponsoring the celebration. This observance celebrates life on our planet and focuses our energies on preservation, education, and stewardship of the earth and our environment.

The school's scheduled events include presentations and activities for the students throughout the school day.

Kim "Dr. Bear" Babcock, who is a professor at Finger Lakes Community College, will amaze her audience with incredible facts about bears, their habits and habitat, and even show the students a real bear claw. **John Hauber**, a wildlife biologist, will offer his extraordinary slide show that highlights local birds and animals and includes a variety of animal skeletons and artifacts that students can touch and see. **Steve Aman**, founder of The Sanctuary at Crowfield Farm in Newark, an environmental education center, will offer a unique hands-on drumming session based on the teachings and beliefs of Native Americans.

Ron Walker, from Friends with Feathers, a bird rescue organization, will speak about birds of prey and bring a live exhibit of some of his rescued friends. **Robin Long**, a teacher from The Harley School, together with her sixth-grade Environmental Studies students, will provide several hands-on displays illustrating the Water Table. **Linda Driscoll**, a wildlife biologist with Delta Labs, will present a very wet interactive display on water insects that includes identifying actual living creatures. **Rich Riedman**, a Bee

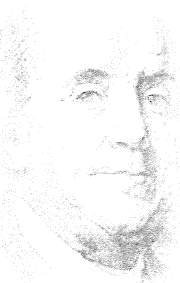
Keeper, will discuss the importance of bees to our environment and offer an interactive exhibit for the students. **Travis Yantomasi**, from Monroe County Environmental Education, will discuss the 3 R's (reduce, reuse, recycle). **Dan Marion**, a professor at Finger Lakes Community College, will guide students in learning skills they can use to identify trees. The students will have an opportunity to do their own fieldwork as they go on a walk to identify trees around the school grounds. **Students** will take part in a school property litter clean up sponsored by Delta Labs. **Peter Jemison**, from Ganondagan State Historic Site, will provide an informative presentation on Native American culture, specifically the Seneca people. Every day life in a bark longhouse will be discussed and a variety of actual artifacts will be available for viewing.

Other special volunteers include Jim Engel from White Oak Nursery, Kim Agar's Environmental Studies students, Harold Coogan's Photography class, Cindy Zauski's art students, Andy Corey's Green Team and Sharon Kissack for her T-Totes idea.

A special thank you must go out to Karen Waldron-Johnson without whom this wonderful event wouldn't be possible. The passion she has for educating children about the earth is obvious based on the tremendous amount of energy and devotion she puts into each Earth Day celebration. A thank you should also go out to Dan McCarthy, Manor School principal, for all the time and effort he puts into coordinating a positive Earth Day learning experience for the Manor School students.

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MENDON FOUNDATION

Birdwalks

at the Lehigh Valley Trail & Mendon Foundation Properties

Bird lovers, families, and hikers come and join us for a bird walk along the Lehigh Valley Trail. Stuart Ackerman, Mendon native, bird enthusiasts and naturalist will lead the walks. Identify and observe a variety of song birds as they wing their way north through Mendon.

DATES & LOCATIONS OF WALKS:

April 26th: Quaker Meeting House Rd. entrance to the Lehigh Valley Trail

May 3rd: Sibleyville Nature Reserve, meet at the end of Gravel Hill Lane, off Sibleyville Rd. & Plains Rd.

May 10th: Mendon Foundation Pittsford-Mendon Center Rd. Property, meet at 1136 Pittsford-Mendon Rd., Director, John Schaefer's house. You may park in the driveway.

May 17th: Fisher Park, Victor, adjacent to the Lehigh Valley Trail. Take Mile Square Rd. to Main St. Fishers, turn onto Old Dutch Road. (For information about the Park go to www.victorhikingtrails.org.)

Time: Meet at 6:30am sharp. Hike to begin @ 6:45 am. This is the best time of day to see the birds feeding.

Be sure to wear appropriate weather gear and hiking shoes. Do not forget your binoculars and camera. Grammar school children and older are invited to come.

Breakfast will be served at the site following the walk. Donations for breakfast are appreciated. Bring a chair for breakfast seating.

Please contact Arlene Cluff @ 624-3182 or e-mail @ ajcluff45@aol.com if you plan to attend any of the walks. This will help in ordering food for breakfast.

We look forward to meeting all of you and hope you will attend this educational and enjoyable event.

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DATE: Saturday, June 7, 2008

TIME: 9 AM – 1 PM

LOCATION: Mendon Station Park, located in the Hamlet of Mendon at the corner of Pittsford-Mendon Rd. (Rt. 64) and Rush-Mendon Rd. (Rt.251) behind Cibi's.

A percentage of the proceeds will benefit the Mendon Foundation. For more information contact Arlene Cluff @ 624-3182 or e-mail @ ajcluff45@aol.com



Mendon Roads and Early Transportation

by Diane Hamm

Large streams and trails preceded Mendon's early roads. Indian trails were narrow paths a few feet wide, since our Native Americans always traveled in single file. Many of these trails had originally been laid out by deer, elk, or buffalo, and were sometimes worn a foot or two below the surface. Rivers were usually forded at the junction of some tributary where a sandbar might be found. Bridges were limited to an occasional tree trunk skillfully felled in the right location.

The pioneers who came to New York from Massachusetts and other eastern states often set out on foot or horseback and drove their stock, while their families came by water. Our earliest settlers came to Mendon in the spring of 1791, bringing their cattle, horses and household goods by covered wagon along the trails before our roads were even built.

Originally, Mendon was part of the Town of Bloomfield, Ontario County until 1821. The earliest roads around Canandaigua (western Ontario County) and what is now the eastern part of Monroe County, and Livingston County were laid out and recorded in 1793. During the year of 1794, Governor George Clinton appointed three commissioners to survey and lay out a road from Utica through Canandaigua to the Genesee River at Avon, "as straight as practical and six rods wide" (a rod being 16 feet). It is now known as the old State Road or Routes 5 and 20.

In 1810, twenty-one years after the first settlement in Bloomfield, the first stagecoaches began to pass through on their way from Albany to Buffalo. The stages were drawn by four horses, had leather springs and rounding

bottoms, with three or four seats on the inside—one or two in the middle and one at each end. Each seat would hold three people comfortably, making an accommodation for up to twelve. An additional person could sit on top with the driver if he chose. Stagecoaches were covered and rocked from side to side. Baggage was carried on top and on the boot at the back.

The stages stopped over night at "public houses" along the road, which were plentiful in those days, since about one farmer in ten living on the main routes kept a tavern. The bar rooms of those days were furnished with a long, narrow table, on which the travelers could spread out the contents of their large lunch boxes.

Each Town had several road districts with a Pathmaster assigned to each district. He was required to go every day with his rake, shovel, hoes and wheelbarrow the entire distance of his section of the road, rain or shine. He was required to remove the loose stones, and keep the shoulders low at the side of the road so the water could pass freely to the ditch. He was also required to keep the ditches open, fill the depressions and ruts, and repair each spot as fast as the surface dressing wore off or was blown away. This constant attention would keep the road in good order and at the least expense to the community.

Maintenance was always a problem. In 1905, an article in a newspaper read: "Highway Commissioners have had little experience in the maintaining of roads. It has been thought that when a road is once built, it will maintain itself. In actuality, the real life of a stone road depends on the

care it receives during the first six months after it is finished, and to the attention it receives after that."

During the winter, transportation was by horse and sleigh since it was difficult to keep the roads clear of snow. Most folks didn't mind traveling by sleigh in the winter months. The roads were nearly impassable during the month of March when they were "breaking up in the spring." It was not at all unusual for the male passengers to be called upon to get out and help in lifting the stagecoach out of a miry bog.

The first half of the nineteenth century constituted the turnpike era in America. At the turn of the century, travel conditions had improved very little over those prior to the Revolution, despite creating additional post roads and the occasional expenditure of state funds. The need of connecting the growing settlements of the West with the eastern seaboard, the natural increase in trade and travel, and the current turnpike movement in England were all factors creating demands for better roads.

A special type of turnpike was the plank road, which became popular during the middle of the 1800s. The idea of using lumber as surfacing had originated in Russia, and later came to Canada and the United States. Enthusiasts rightly claimed that the smooth wooden surface would surely quicken the speed of travel. Unfortunately the flooring half-buried in earth, deteriorated more rapidly than they figured, and high depreciation charges made plant-road companies financial failures.

The first roads in the Town of Mendon were built about 1797, mainly in the

continued on next page

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eastern section; from Ionia to Mendon, west of Mendon, West Bloomfield Road, Taylor Road and one to Norton's Mills (Honeoye Falls). At Mendon's first town meeting on April 4, 1813, John Newton, Thomas Vandevere and Thomas Shaw were appointed Commissioners of the Highway. Other business included giving the added job of fence viewers to the pathmasters. At Mendon's second Town meeting March 15, 1815, fourteen pathmasters were appointed. Much of the Town Minutes contained details of repairing roads, bridges, building new roads, later macadamizing them, and buying road machinery.

About half of Mendon's early roads were named for people and the other half were named for their location. Listed here are a few of our early Mendon roads and where their name came from:

Hopper Hills – The hilly area on the east side of Mendon-Ionia Road and on the south side of Boughton Hill Road is known as the Hopper Hills, which is the highest point in Monroe County. The Hopper Hills name comes from the fact that hops were grown on these hills in early days.

Cheese Factory Road – The records show that a survey in 1804 was made of what is now known as Cheese Factory Road; earlier it was known as Chubb Road. In 1870, there was a cheese factory located at the intersection of West Bloomfield and Cheese Factory Road on the northeast corner until about 1910. The crossroads were formerly known as Treat's Corners.

Mendon-Ionia Road was an Indian trail, which became a stagecoach route that ran from Canandaigua to Rochester. The Mendon-Ionia Road, otherwise known as State Highway

#64, extends from the hamlet of Mendon on the north to the hamlet of Ionia on the south. It was first surveyed in September 1797. This stagecoach route is said to have had a stop at the present junction of Mendon-Ionia Road and Boughton Hill Roads. It is likely that the two homes here were used as inns or taverns.

Quaker Meetinghouse Road was surveyed from the southern town line to Cheese Factory Road in 1804. In 1832, the Mendon Center Quakers built a meetinghouse 30 feet by 40 feet in a grove of locust trees on what they called Quaker Meetinghouse Road near Mendon Center and near the corner of Rush-Mendon Road. In 1910 the meetinghouse was torn down. The Quaker Burying Ground is located just to the south of where the meetinghouse stood.

Sibley Road was originally a continuation of Cheese Factory Road. The name was changed to Sibley Road in the 1950s. The road was named for Hiram Sibley who was the earliest settler on the road in 1823. He built a mill along the stream and started the hamlet of Sibleyville at that location. Hiram Sibley became the Rochester Western Union founder and started his first business enterprise here.

Stoney Lonesome Road – The only reason ever given for the name of this road was for its conditions—stoney and lonesome.

Taylor Road was surveyed in May of 1811. Since it was not designated as a new road, it would appear that the road itself was already in existence at that time. The road was named Taylor Street in 1820 for John Taylor who was then pastor of the Congregational Society. The Congregational Church was located at the northwest corner of Taylor and West Bloomfield Roads.

At the turn of the century, most roads were too narrow—often only about ten feet wide and too steep and winding for the new “horseless carriage”

(automobile), which soon traveled much faster than a horse drawn carriage. The day for serious road improvement had come.



Green Thumbs Needed!

A CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

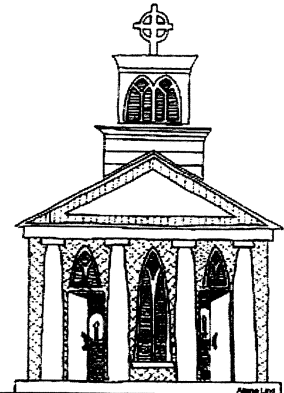
Arlene Cluff, Director and Chairman of the Open Space Committee is looking for some volunteers to help with the Mendon Foundation gardens. The gardens at Rochester Junction on the Lehigh Valley Trail and at Mendon Station Park need spring weeding, clean up and mulching. We would only need two to four hours of your time for each garden. These are fun get-togethers! Conversation, laughter – the time flies by. And the results are enjoyable personally, and by Trail users daily!

Contributions of Hosta and perennial plants are also needed. **Please contact Arlene Cluff @ 624-3182 or ajcluff45@aol.com for more information.**

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Trail News

More Eagle Projects on the Trail

In the last month, two, Troop 10, Life Scouts have selected the Lehigh Valley Trail for their Eagle Projects. These will bring the total number of Eagle Projects on the Trail to 14, representing well over 4,000 hours of work that they have contributed since the program started in 2002. OUTSTANDING!!

It is with the greatest admiration, respect and appreciation, that the Foundation extends our most sincere thanks to all of these fourteen young men for their important contributions to the development of the Trail.

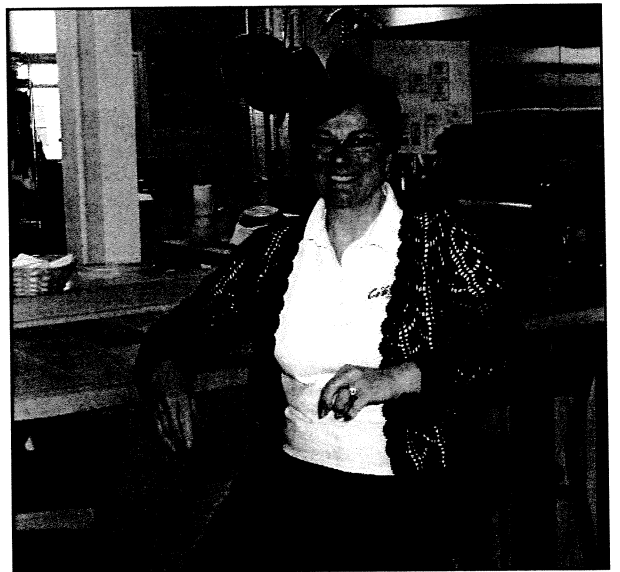
The newest additions are:

Joe McLaughlin, who selected the Speeder Shed at Rochester Junction and expects to start as soon as the weather permits.

Jonathan Rice, who picked the construction of the Information Kiosk at Rush Station and plans to build it over the summer.

Thanks to the generosity of Rosita Caridi-Miller,

owner/chef of **Cibi Deliziosi** in Mendon, the Foundation is now the owner of the antique, steel rimmed, wooden wheeled, railroad baggage cart that is pictured on the cover of this issue. Although the cart's history is obscured in the mists of time, more recently it sat in front of the old Foggy Bottom Market. Rosita acquired the building in 2005 and undertook extensive remodeling, to create what is now Cibi deliziosi. As you might guess from its name, Cibi's features Italian inspired cuisine in its Gourmet Shop, Catering Service, Cooking Classes and Parties.



The Foundation plans to start restoration work on the cart as soon as the weather warms and expects to have it on display in Mendon Station Park by Festival time in September. We will also need to build a roof over the cart to provide some protection from the elements.

Anyone interested in helping on this construction project should contact: Warren Wallace at 624-5754 or e-mail him at warrfoote@aol.com

& Views

Report on Trail Feasibility Studies

Caledonia Trail Study

The study examining the feasibility of extending the Lehigh Valley Trail (LVT) to the Village of Caledonia neared its completion, with the Engineer's report at a Caledonia public meeting on March 4th. The report concluded that the use of the old Lehigh Valley RR corridor was not viable due to a variety of factors including private land ownership, and the mining out and chemical contamination of parts of the corridor. The study did find that extending the trail .6 miles west from the intersection of the LVT and the Genesee Greenway to River Rd., on the Foundation's property, was a viable and a desirable alternative, since it would provide user parking and access for both the LVT and the Greenway on River Rd. in the Town of Caledonia..

The Mendon Foundation has already started to seek grant funding for this extension of the trail.

Honeoye Falls Trail Study

The Genesee Transportation Council has advised us that, the first meeting of the Honeoye Falls Trail Study Steering Committee is expected take place in late March. This study will determine the feasibility of extending the Lehigh Valley Trail south from Rochester Junction through the Village of Honeoye Falls, to the Monroe County Line.

PATHWAYS

is the newsletter of the Mendon Foundation, a completely volunteer organization which exists with the generous support of its members, volunteers, and contributors. This newsletter is published three times a year and paid for through the generous support of our advertisers.

The Mendon Foundation

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OUR VISION STATEMENT

We believe in preservation.

We believe in recreation.

We believe in education.

We believe in community stewardship.

OUR PURPOSE

To improve the quality of life in our community.

As we succeed in these objectives, we enhance property values for all Mendon property owners. The Foundation is supported by membership fees, grants and other contributions. Donations to the Mendon Foundation are tax deductible. Proceeds are used to cover easement acquisitions, monitoring and communications. All labor is volunteer. Our phone: 585-624-8730

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My interests are:

- Lehigh Valley Trail
- Mendon Station Park
- Community Playground
- Mendon Hamlet
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