



THE SENTINEL

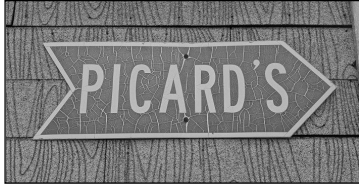
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The Newsletter of the New Scotland Historical Association

Spring 2021

A HISTORY OF PICARD'S GROVE

By Chris Albright

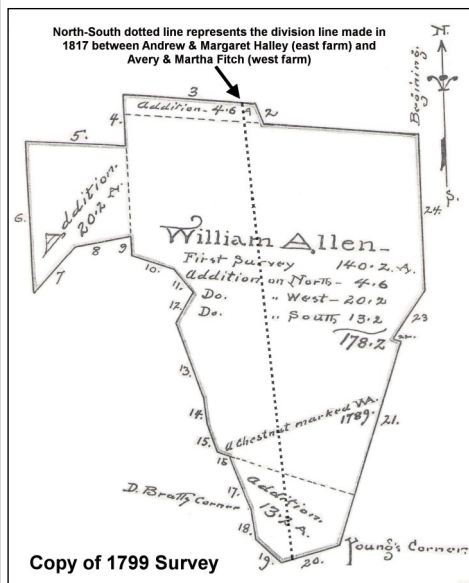
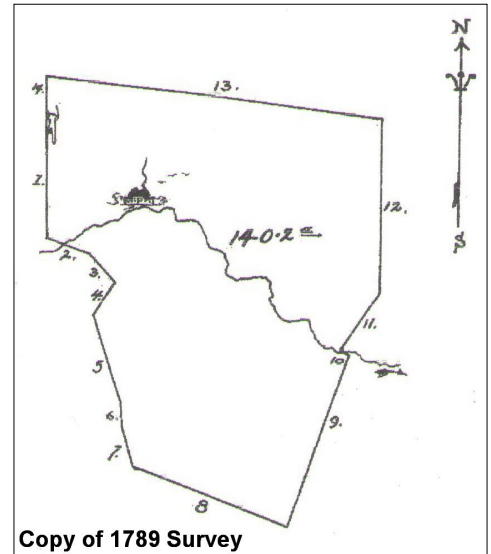


Recently, Picard's Grove of New Scotland was at risk of being sold to a developer. The House and Barns were threatened with demolition. Fortunately, through the efforts of the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy, a suitable buyer was found to preserve both the land and buildings. What follows is a brief history of the farm.

The site was settled sometime in the late 1770s or 1780s. A survey made for the Rensselaerswyck Manor in 1789 shows that William Allen was the leaseholder. The survey shows a house at or near the location of the present house and also shows a stream running through the property with the direction of flow. The size of the parcel was 140.2 acres.

William Allen and his wife Janet Drummond came to New Scotland around the year 1779. They were accompanied by his brother David and wife. The brothers were born in the Lowlands of Scotland at a place called Fowlis Wester, near Perth. William settled along the base of the Helderberg Escarpment and David settled on what is now Clipp Road.

The farm was again surveyed on October 3rd, 1799. This time showing parcels added on the north, south, and west. These additions increased the size of the farm to 178.2 acres.



William Allen had seven daughters and no sons. When he died in 1805, five of the seven daughters were married. In his will, William left his whole estate to his wife for the duration of her life. After her death, the farm was to be split between his two youngest, unmarried daughters, Margaret and Martha. In 1806, Margaret married Andrew Halley and in 1807, Martha married Avery Fitch. The 1810 census shows Avery Fitch and Andrew Halley living close to each other in the Town of Bethlehem. (New Scotland was part of Bethlehem until 1832)

It is unknown for sure when their mother died, but in 1817 the farm was surveyed and split between the two daughters. Andrew and Margaret Halley received the east half and Avery and Martha Fitch received the west half. The east half of the farm was sold at that time and the Halleys moved to Oneida County. Eventually, the east half of the farm was acquired by the Wood family and became known as the Woodwind Farm.

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

It has been more than a year since the Covid 19 pandemic started and we are finally seeing the light at the end of the tunnel. We have all tried to accommodate to the new normal including NSHA. NSHA has continued to persevere in pursuing our mission: "preserves, protects and promotes history in the Town of New Scotland." In fact, we still have some exciting news to report.

First, this May we will be holding our first virtual full membership meeting using WebEx, a remote meeting platform we contracted with using grant money provided by the Pomeroy Foundation. The meeting will be on the same date that we would normally have our annual full membership meeting – Tuesday May 4, 2021 at 7:30pm. Information on how to attend the meeting is included in this edition of the *Sentinel* and will also be e-mailed to members for whom we have an e-mail address closer to the meeting date.

Second, NSHA's long-term project to digitize access to its collections using Past Perfect software is nearing completion. We now have more control and provide more access to our collections than ever before. This has already benefited researchers interested in information about New Scotland.

Lastly, the Joint Town of New Scotland/Village of Voorheesville Historic Preservation Commission is pursuing a *Preserve New York* grant offered by the Preservation League of New York. This grant will fund a Cultural Resources Survey of the Village of Voorheesville and the hamlets of New Scotland and New Salem. The products of this survey will increase awareness of the historic resources we have in these areas of the Town, support tourism allowed by the Rail Trail, and serve as the basis for establishing historic districts. The grant will be submitted by one of the participating municipalities and supported by NSHA. It is hoped and expected that financial support will be forthcoming from NSHA, the Village, and the Town since the grant will only pay for part of the project and matching funds are required. Additional funds will need to be generated from the community **including NSHA's membership**. I hope that those of you who can, will support this project.

From the *Altamont Enterprise*, March 21, 1919

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS BEGINS AGAIN SUNDAY, MARCH 30

Clocks of Entire Nation Will Be Set Forward One Hour That Morning

People of this vicinity, in common with the rest of the nation, will wake up one hour earlier than usual one week from the coming Sunday – March 30. It is then that the daylight saving law, which says that at 2 o'clock on the morning of the last Sunday in March time shall be set forward one hour, will go into effect.

Train schedules and church services all over the country are affected by the law. Last year trains were held over one hour.

Churchgoers who forget to set their timepieces ahead one hour before retiring Saturday night, March 29, will arrive at church just in time to hear the final "Amen." So don't forget the date.

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Avery Fitch and Martha Allen Fitch raised three sons and six daughters on the west farm in the house of her parents. A major upgrade to the house took place, probably in 1822, as that date is inscribed in a foundation stone.

In 1848, Avery Fitch died and the farm became the possession of his second son, Ebenezer Allen Fitch. Ebenezer had married Anna Eliza Crouse about 1834 and eventually had four sons and five daughters. Two of the sons, John Hiram Fitch and Allen Fitch, became doctors. On the 1855 census, Ebenezer reported 100 acres improved and 10 acres unimproved. The improved acreage was comprised of 60 acres plowed, 30 acres in meadow and 10 acres in pasture. Also reported were 18 acres planted in corn, 1 acre in potatoes and 900 bushels of apples harvested.

Ebenezer Allen Fitch died in 1898. In his will he directed that the farm be sold. His sister, Amy L Fitch and husband Peter A. Crouse purchased the farm. After the death of Peter A. Crouse in 1903, the farm was sold to Robert T. Martin. It's interesting to note that Robert's wife, Amelia Wood was the sister of Charles Wood, who owned the adjacent Woodwind farm (original east half of the William Allen farm). Robert T. Martin died in 1916 and the farm was sold to Herman Picard and wife Meta in 1917.



Picnic tables nestled under pine trees at the grove in New Scotland.



The farmhouse on the Picard property is at the site where William Allen settled, at the base of the Helderberg escarpment, in 1779.



Herman, Meta and son, Herman Junior.

Herman E. Picard was born in Remscheid, Germany in 1872. In 1897, Herman sailed on the Red Star Line ship "Westernland" from Antwerp to Philadelphia. In 1903 and 1904, Picard is listed as a Gardener in the Albany Directory. In the 1907 and 1908 Directory he is listed as an operator of a saloon. The 1910 Census shows Herman, Meta and son, Herman Jr., living at 241 Central Avenue. He was the proprietor of a liquor store. Herman's obituary in the November 8th, 1946, *Altamont Enterprise* probably best describes the beginnings of Picard's Grove:

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MAN WHO ACHIEVED WIDE FAME FOR HIS CLAMBAKES, DIES

New Salem – Herman E. Picard, widely known in the Albany county area since 1917 for the clambakes he put on at Picard's Grove in New Salem., died Sunday at St. Peter's Hospital, Albany. He was 71.

Picard's famous outing spot started as a farm. Picard had been a popular grill keeper in Albany for years before he decided to take up farming. About 29 years ago he bought a 134 acre wooded plot in New Salem, but as a farm it didn't last long.

Parties of friends began dropping in at the farm and asking Picard to prepare chicken and steak dinners. Clubs wanted to hold banquets and roasts there. Before long, the 13 cows Picard had bought with the intention of selling milk had been cut up into steaks.

All that remains now of the farm is a prize apple orchard. But Picard served as many as 1000 people at a time at his famous clambakes.

Herman W. Picard Jr., along with his children, continued to run the grove after his father's death. After the death of her mother, Alice Erie Chesebro Picard in 1997, Jeanne Picard Fish became the owner and primary operator of the grove. As the grove entered the 21st century, fewer and fewer events took place. Finally, the farm and grove were sold to the Glover family in 2020.

Interestingly, Picard's Grove was originally named because of the grove of trees where the picnic area was behind the house. No evidence of the trees remains today and the grove appears to have been in the same area where the baseball diamond is now.

NSHA Will Hold its May 4, 2021 Annual Meeting Remotely

Given the uncertainty of the COVID 19 pandemic and lingering health risks, NSHA will conduct its 2021 Annual Membership Meeting remotely using WebEx. WebEx meeting is an online meeting platform that allows you to virtually meet with other people, without leaving your home. WebEx meetings require a computer with Internet access or phone. By logging into the meeting via the Internet, you will be able to see the presenter's computer screen.

The Annual Membership Meeting will be held **on Tuesday May 4, 2021, at 7:30 pm**. Members will be able to attend the meeting by one of the following ways:

Join from the meeting link: [https://townofnewscotlandhistoricalassociation.my.webex.com/townofnewscotlandhistoricalassociation.my/j.php?](https://townofnewscotlandhistoricalassociation.my.webex.com/townofnewscotlandhistoricalassociation.my/j.php?MTID=mf215b50876418cfc7c6d043341486dad)

MTID=mf215b50876418cfc7c6d043341486dad

Join by meeting number: Meeting number (access code): 182 107 8810 Meeting password: J6JbAWe3xt2 (56522933 from phones and video systems)

Tap to join from a mobile device (attendees only):

+1-415-655-0001,,1821078810#56522933# US Toll Some mobile devices may ask attendees to enter a numeric password.

Join by phone: +1-415-655-0001 US Toll

Join by video system, application or Skype for business: Dial 1821078810@webex.com

You can also dial 173.243.2.68 and enter your meeting number.

If you need help? Go to <https://help.webex.com>

If NSHA has your email address, we will email this information to you closer to the meeting date.

TROOP 73: FROM THE 1980s INTO THE NEW MILLENIUM

By Sherry Burgoon, Editor

PART 3

Editor's note: An unexpected knock at my front door during the last of week of January revealed the reason for Troop 73's continued success. Dr. Mike Jarus delivered me two fresh containers of apple sauce made by the scouts over the weekend. A life-time scout and volunteer with the troop since the 80s, Dr. J, to the scouts, came to thank me for the last two Sentinel articles. He graciously agreed to answer many questions helping to complete this last segment.

Troop 73's success during the first 60 years was attributed to the dedicated scout leaders and the dozens of moms and dads who volunteered endless hours to the troop. During those years they were nurturing a Voorheesville scouter who was passed the torch in 1989. In a press release to *The Altamont Enterprise* on November 21, it was revealed that Scoutmaster Joe Colburn was planning to pass on the torch at the end of his term. In his resignation letter, Colburn highly recommended Ray Ginter. "He will be the troop's first home grown scoutmaster in decades. He started in cub scouts right here in Voorheesville, and before that his father, Paul Ginter, was an assistant scoutmaster of Troop 73. Already he is credited with computerizing the troops records and activities," continued the press release.



Totem pole carved by scouters overlooking the campfire— Coughtry Farm.



Dog sledding on the St. Lawrence River. University of Laval Forestry School at Foret Montmorency, Quebec.

Ray Ginter has continued the strong leadership of his predecessors for 31 years, the longest running tenure. Scoutmaster Ginter has dedicated to the local troop as well as the Five Rivers Council, Rotary Scout Reservation and as a Philmont High Committee member. In 2004 he was presented the Silver Beaver Award for his "distinguished service making an impact on the youth in his region through hard work, self-sacrifice, dedication and many years of service." Weekend outings at the Coughtry farm on Hilton Road for more than 40 years continue, and Ray volunteers his vacation week taking the scouts to Rotary Camp each summer, only missing 2 years.

As the troop's 75th anniversary neared, Brice Butler's two-page spread on January 4, 1996, *The Altamont Enterprise* provided a first-hand account from scouter Chris Pennock revealing his experiences:

"I don't know if they are still doing this, but when we were scouts, every month they would go on a weekend trip-hiking, canoeing, bicycling. We learned a lot of survival skills and camping skills. We weren't allowed to use leantos. The five years I was in it, I racked up three or four 50-mile awards, week-long trips where we would hike or canoe; bicycle trips were usually longer." Chris was a 70s scouter.

(continued from page 5)

When Dr. J met with me to discuss the scouts and his involvement, the words which Chris Pennock shared from 40 years ago could be written by a scout in 2021. Mike Jarus began his scouting in Cleveland, Ohio. By the time he was 14 years old, he was guiding Boy Scout canoers on the shores of Lake Huron in the Georgian Bay where the French River empties. Since 1987, Dr. J has run these wilderness trips with Troop 73 every 4 years except when the Gross Morne Newfoundland and Quebec Foret Montmorency snowshoe trips, both Dr. J wilderness adventures, were held. An early email from Scoutmaster Ginter provided some of the criteria needed to attend:

1. You must be in good physical and psychological condition and able to pass the BSA swim test.
2. Preference will be given to scouts holding canoeing merit badge.
3. You must be able to **smile** while hordes of **gigantic mosquitos** try to bite you during 7days of continuous rain.
4. If you know that you are a **cry baby**, please **don't** sign up.

And the list went on with further words of warning to the faint of heart!

No scout has been excluded from these trips because of financial need. Typically running around \$300, anonymous donors in the Troop 73 family have always come forward so no scout would be turned away. Dr. J shared that he and his wife always take a pre-trip to the area scouting for interesting museums for a respite on the 5-hour trip from Toronto on top of the drive from Albany. All safety pre-cautions are taken ensuring the scouts will have a successful experience.



Ray Ginter with scouters who have built strong bonds.

For more than 20 years the pancake supper continues to be the troop's only fundraiser. Long-time volunteer, George Wuttke, has spent so many years making sure the supper runs smoothly long after his sons have moved on. Along with Scoutmaster Ginter, Dr. J recognized so many unsung heroes: Robin Coughtry and his farm, Frank Person, Bob Mudge-American Legion, Tom Davidson, Lou Van Zutphen, Dick Hihn, Bob Panthen, Bob Downen, Lee Masterson, Jason Windsor, all the Moms and countless more behind the scenes.

Hiking, canoeing, and bicycling will continue to provide an avenue for scouts to learn survival, leadership and public speaking skills with the mentoring of the many dedicated leaders of Troop 73 for many more years to come.

Correction: In the Winter 2020 issue, Howard Coughtry is pictured with Ray Ginter. He was incorrectly identified as Frank Person.

Sources: <http://nyshistoricalnewspapers.org/newspapers>

A special thank you to Colleen Ellithorpe who provided press releases, photos and newspaper articles found in the Boy Scout archives housed in the Voorheesville Public Library. Without Dr. Michael Jarus' gracious delivery of apple sauce, I would not have been able to learn so much about the current scouting ventures. Dina Fisher provided the photo of Ray Ginter with the 4 scouts.

SUNSHINE'S CORNER
BUCKAROO STORY
CONTINUED
By MaryBeth Felice

One day we took time off from work to go explore. Of course a wrangler and helper went with us; otherwise we'd get lost. We rode out to an old cabin. It was in the middle of nowhere! Who would want to live there? But the funniest thing was the bathroom.....if you could call it that. Outside the cabin, leaning against one side, was a folding luggage rack with a toilet seat on top of it! No little room; no "box seat" even; no toilet paper and certainly no privacy. What a life! One of our most exciting rides was coming back from a trip in the mountains where we were looking for



arrowheads. As we mounted up after lunch there was a funny noise, like thunder. Now it hardly ever rains in this part of Nevada, so we thought "Nope. Can't be thunder." We were only on the trail another 5 minutes when we heard it again. Yep – no mistaking it, thunder! Well we were 2 hours from the ranch on horseback, so we began to trot up. Before long the skies got black, the wind came up, and we began to see lightning. The noise from the thunder now was frightening, bouncing off the canyon walls. Rain started blowing in our eyes and on our hats and horses. Suddenly the lightning hit a mountain to our left. The dry grass burst into flame, and smoke began to rise up. We trotted on faster. Now the rain changed to hail, hunks of ice pounding us. We were riding a narrow ledge around one mountain range. It began to get slippery! I wasn't afraid yet, but my horse hated to be touched by the ears, and now the hail was pounding him on the head, the face, the EARS! He began to back off the trail, trying to get away from the hitting of the ice pellets. He began to back down the side of the mountain. Now I was scared! We all quickly dismounted and somehow I convinced him to come back on the trail. We led the horses for the next half hour, sliding on the muddy path and frozen from the hail, wind and rain.



At last we were out of the worst of the storm, but the wind continued to howl and plaster our soaked clothing to our bodies. We had another hour to ride before we were at the ranch. Oh, it was a welcome sight to see when at last it came into view.

It took me a hot shower and another hour to warm up once we were "home." It will take me a lot longer to forget that ride.

It was a week of heat, desert, sage brush and hard work. But I was there with friends and beautiful blue skies, kind cowboys and willing horses, so it was an unforgettable week.

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Museum Hours

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museum will be closed
until further notice**

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