

Town of Ossian Historical Society Newsletter

17th Edition

March, 2015

Journal of Annis Bisbee Canfield Written April 1875

The summer I was four years old we moved to Albany, NY and lived there about four years. My father was a contractor of public works. While there he was engaged in building a turnpike road between Albany and Schenectady, a distance of fifteen miles. We later moved to Saratoga, town of Charlton, N.Y. twenty miles from Saratoga Springs where we resided about five years.

While there my father kept a hotel, operated a small farm and contracted for ground work around the Union College in Schenectady.

My oldest brother, Nahum, was married to Marie Hollenbeck and my eldest sister, Sally, married Isaac Consaulas. While we were living here, Nahum, was drafted into the War of 1812 and left home a short time after he was married. His wife came and lived with us while he was away. He was brought home sick from Sackets Harbor and nearly lost the sight of one eye.

My father worked for a long time in drawing cannon, powder, cannon balls, etc. from Albany to Sackets Harbor. Our house was a large two storied house painted yellow. We had a fine large orchard of plum and apple trees. From here we went to Cayuga Co., same state, starting on the 22nd day of Feb. 1816 and arrived in Cayuga Co. Mar. 1st. The means of travel was by teams and wagons. Several trips were made to bring all our goods.

There my father bought about five hundred acres of heavily forested timber land with a fine stream of water running through it. Salmon Creek was its name. On this creek father built two large saw mills. which he named Lion's Head and Lion's Paw. We lived in a log house belonging to a neighbor until our house was built. Three miles from this place were cultivated fields on which were fine apple and plum orchards. The white people had already taken possession from the Indians. We lived there about or six years until the lumbering was

done

In Aug, 1819, father's brother Alanson, a hired man and myself, then seventeen years of age, accompanied my father to a site he had chosen in Ossian Alle. Co., N.Y., where he planned to do lumbering and clear the land. A log house had been built beforehand by him on the place which later became the home of my sister Sarah Consaulus.

Father left us together and with provisions for a short time when he would return. His words to me were (and in 1875 they still ring in my ears) "Daughter, take your place as a pioneer woman doing what you can that forests may be cleared and homes made and while your Uncle Alanson and his help are building a large and better cabin on the hill above, prepare the food and lend an air of cheerfulness and it will not be long before we will again all be together."

Father brought supplies about every four weeks and watched the building of our cabin on a hill three miles farther from where we were. The hill they called Frog Hill, why I don't know. I never heard frogs

there. At Christmas time we were in our new cabin and then my sister Sally and her husband, Isaac Consaulus moved out and into the first cabin we had. I was very glad and we saw each other often. About this time my brother, Nahum, and wife with their four children bought land afterwards owned by Israel Canfield Sr. and owned now in 1875 by his son, Charles Canfield. This was about a mile north of our cabin. I felt then I had quite near neighbors and felt less lonely.

I was very lonely and homesick at first there in the wilderness but I always remembered father's words. I had a big black dog for company and security when Uncle Alanson was working which was a great deal of company for me, especially when Indians came by our cabin! They were friendly but I was always a little afraid of them. There was but little cleared land for quite awhile.

I used to sit on the fallen logs cut by Uncle Alanson and listen to the sounds of nature. A cabin small was made nearby and two men lived in it and cut for my father and Uncle Alanson.

My life here in the pine, hemlock and chestnut woods was a new and lonely life for me and I very much missed the company of my young girl friends of whom I was so fond and my mother to whom I was very close. We wrote to each other but had no way of sending letters only by father when he came to bring our provisions every three or four weeks. On a spring trip mother came and Marcia and Jarvis who stayed with Uncle Alanson and I went home to Genoa, Cayuga Co., N.Y. and stayed a month and then returned to the cabin.

In the fall father and mother came, father having finished the Cayuga Co. lumbering and our family was again together and father began clearing the land he had acquired and time in our forest home passed more pleasantly.

In the summer of 1821, in July, I continued teaching school in Ossian Center about five miles from our hill top cabin home. I was nineteen years of age. This was indeed an event in my life. Although I had had the best schooling possible in those days under the circumstances and much tutoring from my mother, a well educated woman, I had no idea that I

was capable of teaching school, but the trustees sought me out and said they could find no one any more competent, so I undertook it and it was very successful. I received for my services \$1.00 per week and boarded around with the parents of my pupils. The number of pupils in a family determined the number of days I stayed in each. \$1.00 per week was the usual fee in 1821. The schools were not "kept" in the severe winter months and in the following winter I stayed home spinning flax for our linens. My mother used to stay there is nothing finer than the linen from the flax plant!

The next summer I taught school on Ossian Hill three miles from home and near where my sister Sally Consaulas lived. My fee was \$1.00 weekly.

In the fall, I went to the village of Dansville and learned the tailors trade of a Mr. Epley. I was there four months. He boarded me and paid me seventh-five cents per week and went home only twice in that time. In the next summer, I taught in the same school on Ossian Hill. At the close, I went to see a Mrs. Stacy,

milliner of Dansville to see if she would take me as an apprentice. She did. I boarded with her and received fifty cents weekly. After working two months I concluded I was not calculated for a hat trimmer so gave up the business and worked at the tailoring and teaching until I was married to Israel Canfield Jr. For the finest broadcloth coats I received two dollars and fifty cents for making. When I went out to sew my fee was fifty cents a day. After my marriage to Israel Canfield, we lived in Ossian until we moved Ogden, Utah in 1863.

We lived in his father's house about 20 years. when our eldest daughter, Harriet, was fourteen years old we sent her to the Nunda village to school and my second daughter went with her and stayed with her to be doctored for a spinal trouble. We had to other children, Adelbert and Rosalthe. Adelbert died at age of about two years and my daughter aurora on Apr. 23rd, 1867.

I joined the church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints June 1845 while in Ossian and was baptised by Elder Sission Chase and was re-baptised on coming to Ogden, 1864.
Annis Bisbee Canfield, writer of the

journal, died May 16, 1886 in Ogden, Utah.

Annis Bisbee was the daughter of Luther Bisbee I and Sarah Whitmarsh She was born 8/26/1802, married Israel Canfield Jr. 3/29/1832 in the Township of Ossian, Allegany Co., NY

The journal was copied by Marion Mitchell Barron June 1960 and submitted to the Livingston County Historian

Rhea Walker, Historian

Ilene and Walt Leiter

Ilene and Walt Leiter lived in Ossian most of their lives. They had two children, Joseph and Ilene's niece, Cindy Smallman, who they raised since she was one. They grew and canned their food and Walt was capable of fixing anything.

The Leiter family lived on Frog Hill Road in Ossian. Walt's parent were Cecelia and William Leiter and they had three boys, Bill Jr., Walt and Oscar. Both Walt and Ilene served in WWII, Ilene as a Captain in the Nurse Corp and Walt in the Air Force. Walt was stationed in India and Ilene in Europe on the front lines. They met after the war, through Ilene's

brother, Ed Nichols. Walt was quite taken with Ilene and he wrote to her for quite awhile as she continued with her nursing career in Buffalo, working at the Buffalo Children's Hospital. They were married on September 20, 1949 and settled in Ossian on Valley Road. The home that they lived in was once owned by Zephir Fontaine and a park called Joffre Park was near the house.

During the early years of their marriage, after the children were in school, Ilene worked as a nurse at Foster Wheeler. Walt was self-employed as a sawyer and had a repair shop at the four corners in Ossian with his brother-in-law, Russ Vroman. It is not known how long Walt stayed in business with Russ but during that time Walt was known for owning a 1939 Indian motorcycle with the suicide shifter in the middle. He belonged to the Hornell Motorcycle Club. His motorcycle days ended when he slid down Portageville Hill Road on his side. Ilene said that that was enough of the motorcycle riding and Walt quit.

Walt and Ilene are buried in the Canaseraga cemetery probably with many of the Nichols family. The

remaining Leiters are resting in our Wood Cemetery.

Cathy Saunders

All Roads Lead Home

After studying many Census' I began to wonder about the road names that have changed or the roads that have been abandoned in Ossian. I was wondering if anyone would have some information about the old road names and the abandoned roads. I feel a little in awe and very grateful that Ossian roadways can still be listed on one page. The following roads were listed in the 1910 Census:

- Blank St. or Blank Hill Rd.
- McCarthy Road
- Mill Road
- Burrell Road or McCurdy Rd.
- Whitney Rd.
- Short St. or Wagner Rd.
- Pine Mill Rd.
- Nichols Rd.
- Goodwin Rd.
- Canaseraga Rd. or Poags Hole Rd.
- Bonner Rd.
- Valley Rd., Ossian Center Rd.,
- McNinch Rd., Shay Rd., Runyon Rd.,
- West View Rd., Telegraph Rd., Frog Hill Rd., Forrest Rd.,

Dannok Hill Rd., Englert Rd., Hampton Hill Rd., Scoville Rd., Neu Rd., Fred Bonner Rd. and Scott Hill Rd.

Cathy Saunders

Cathy's turn for a recipe!

Milk Paint

This really works. Only use on clean as possible wood.

1 qt. of skim milk, at room temperature

1 oz. hydrated lime by weight, do not use quick lime - it will heat up.

Optional: 1 to 2 1/2 lbs. of whiting chalk, which I used and had to order on line. When I used the chalk, it created a thicker paint, which I liked.

1. Stir in enough skim milk to hydrated lime to make a cream. Stir in remaining skim milk; mix well.
2. Mix the chalk in last.

I used this on the inside of the chicken coop. It took a half a day to dry and do not plan on saving any that is left unless it is in the refig, because milk spoils. Good luck!

Chicken Barbeque

Chicken BBQ is Sat., May 2, 2015, 5PM, Ossian Community Center, Ossian Hill Rd. \$9.00 per person.

Pre-Sale Tickets available: call Cathy, 519 6897, Barb, 335 8215, Rhea, 335 5312. Hope to see you there.

Oisín

It is said that our town was named after a warrior poet, Oisín, oh-sheen, Irish pronunciation, in Welch it is spelled Osian and spelled Ossian (aw-shen) in English. We have not discovered who chose the name or why but here is some interesting information about Oisín.

The ancient Celts were not a race nor were they a nation but rather a variety of people bound by language, customs and religion, not by a central government. The Celts lived off of the land, farming and raising stock. They had an exciting mythology made up of hundreds of tales. The myths were not recorded but they were passed on orally. The knowledge that we have of the gods, heroes and villains of the Celtic mythology came mostly from the Romans. The Romans sometimes referred to Celtic gods by the Roman names and because the Romans and Celts were enemies the Roman accounts were not always reliable

and their descriptions of Celtic bellers were at times unfavorable.

Early Irish myths melted mythology and history together by describing how Ireland was settled by different groups of Celtic deities and humans. The tales, filled with magic and excitement, tell of battles between the forces of light and darkness. They tell of a time when the gods lived on earth, not in the heavens, and used their powers to create civilization in Ireland and bring fertility to the land.

Oisín was a legendary Celtic hero and poet and was a warrior of the *fianna* in the Ossianic or Fenian cycle of Irish mythology. He was the son of Fionn (or Finn) macCumhíll and Sídhbh and he was the narrator of much of the Ossianic cycle. His name means young deer or fawn.

According to the story that was told his mother, Sídhbh, was turned into a deer by a druid, Fear Doirche. She was caught by Fionn when he was hunting but he did not kill her and she was changed into human form. Fionn gave up hunting and fighting and settled down with her and she soon became pregnant, but

she was turned back into a deer and went back into the wild. Fionn found his child seven years later.

In "Oisín in Tir na n-Og", Oisín's most famous adventure tale, he meets a woman, whose father, king of Tir na n-Og (the Land of Youth), had turned her head into that of a pig's head so no one would marry her. The king had been told by a Druid that he would remain king until his son or son-in-law would take the crown off of his head. Since he had no sons he felt that the pig's head would keep him from having a son-in-law. The Druid, feeling bad that he had given the king the means to turn the princess' head into that of a pig, told the princess that she would keep this pig's head until she married one of the sons of Fin (or Fionn) macCumhíll. She left home and came to Erin where she met Oisín while he was hunting. He had a great load of game to carry and she offered to help him. She told Oisín her story about the pig's head and that marriage to him would set her free. Oisín stated that if marriage to him would free her from the spell that he would not leave the pig's head on her long.

They got married without pg 7

delay and the Queen of Youth told him that she could not stay there long and unless he would come with her to Tir na n-Og they had to part. Oisín left with her and when it was time to have a new king in Tir na n-Og, he became king. Oisín had two children, a son, Oscar and a daughter, Plor na m Ban.

Oisín stayed in Tir na n-Og for 300 years (to him it seemed like three years). He decided to return to Ireland. He was given his wife's white horse to ride and was warned not to dismount, because if he touched the ground the 300 years would catch up to him. When he returns home he finds the hill of Almu and Fionn's home abandoned and in disrepair. Later he tried to help some men lift a stone out of the road onto a wagon and his girth breaks and Oisín falls to the ground and becomes an old man as he was warned. In some of the versions of this story, just before Oisín dies, he is visited by St. Patrick. He tells the saint what happens and he dies.

Oisín's grave site is disputed. It has been said that it is in Glenalmond in Perth, Scotland and others say that it is located in the Nine Glens of

Antrim at a site that has been known for generations as "Oisín's Grave".

The following is a song that Oisín once sang to Saint Patrick about Finn (Fionn):

"These are the things that were dear to Finn-

The din of battle, the banquet's glee,
The bay of his hounds through the rough glen ringing,
And the blackbird singing in Letter Lee,

The shingle grinding along the shore
When they dragged his war-boats down to sea,

The dawn wind whistling his spear among,

And the magic song of his minstrels three."

Rhea Walker, Historian

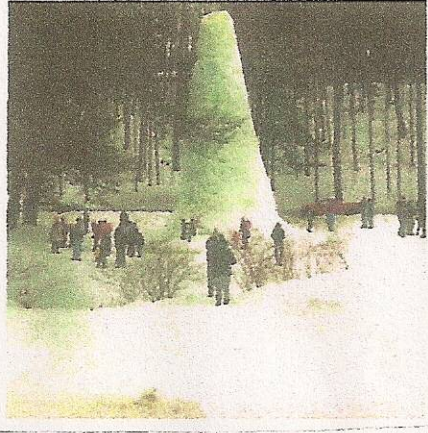
Sources: Myths Encyclopedia, Myths and Legends of the World

Myths and Folk-Lore of Ireland,
Jeremiah Curtin

Myths and Legends of the Celtic Race
Myths Encyclopedia

Just a reminder if you haven't paid your membership fee it is due now.

While we didn't have an ice volcano,



We did have words of inspiration on a side hill
in an old peach orchard on McCurdy Road.

"On my way home from a meeting yesterday afternoon, I spotted this inspirational message tracked in snow that was nearly knee-deep in places, in 20-foot letters on a hillside in my neighbors' pasture. The temp was a balmy 45 degrees--the warmest day in two months--making this message of hope especially meaningful. It's been a long, hard, snowy winter with the coldest February in recorded history. I thought to myself, "Hats off to whoever did this!" Thank you to John Adamski for this wonderful picture and note.



Thanks to Heather Pero