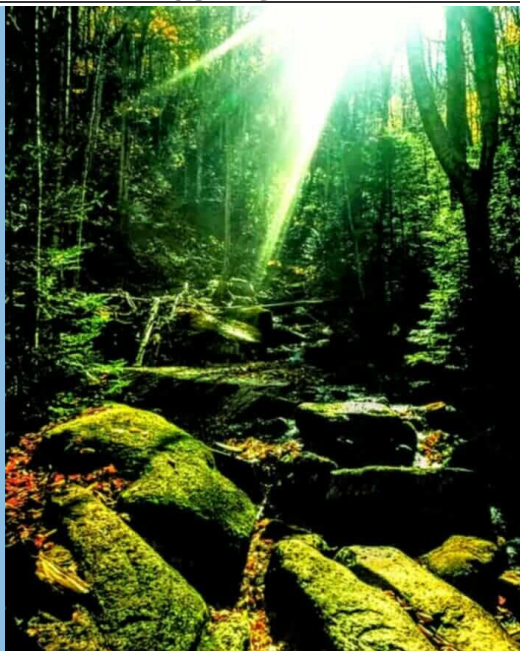


The Story of Mayfield

ERIC CLOSE, TOWN AND VILLAGE HISTORIAN

SIXTH ISSUE - VERNAL RETROSPECTIVE - APRIL THROUGH JUNE 2025

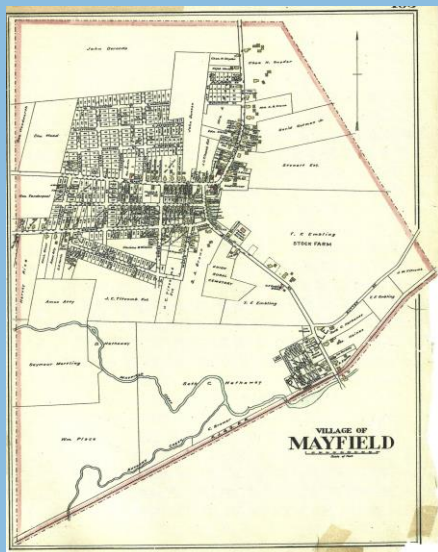


Ode to Spring...

Roberts Creek near Sunset Bay, Dennie Hollow

It starts with just a single note...A certain shade of blue...Is that a red- winged black birds song? Coming through the air to you? The sun is in a different place than what is was before...It rises now across the field to hit the cowbarn door...I hear the trickle of the Meadow stream from cross the wooded lot...Music to my ears my friend, This sound I likes a lot! Before you know it the air is filled with birds upon the wing...The streams are rushing through the fields, Oh joy I think it's Spring!

~ Terrie Zierak



1905 Map, Village of Mayfield. Full size available for view and download at the Historian's archives, on the Mayfield Town Website. The full size image shows the owners of each lot as well as the location of structures, and the F.J.&G. Railroad.

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- THE LOST SACANDAGA VALLEY – **ELIPHAZ DAY AND HIS NAMESAKE TOWN**



RICE HOMESTEAD, APRIL 1936

Come take a step back in time at
The Rice Homestead! We look
forward to seeing you!

Bob Suits
President,
Mayfield Historical Society
Rice Homestead
328 Riceville Road
Gloversville, NY 12078

MAYFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNOUNCES 2025 EVENTS

MAYFIELD, NY - The Mayfield Historical Society, home of The Rice Homestead at 328 Riceville Road, in Mayfield, New York, has announced its 2025 events.

Starting Monday, April 21, at 6:30 p.m. with Fulton County Historian Samantha Hall-Saladino and Jessica Henry Clements will present "Fashion in the Age of the Suffragists" at the Mayfield Presbyterian Church, 22 N Main Street, Mayfield.

On Saturday, June 14, the 42nd Annual Strawberry Festival with music by Aaron Mittler will take place at The Rice Homestead from 12 to 4 p.m. A "Treasures in the Trunk" sale will also be part of this event, and the historic Rice Homestead is open for tours.

Thursday, July 17, the Annual Ice Cream Social with music by the Musicats Duo will be held at The Rice Homestead from 6 to 8 p.m.

Monday, Aug. 18, David Brooks, Education Director of Schoharie Crossing State Park will present "Strange History from Along the Erie Canal at Schoharie Crossing" at 6:30 p.m. at the Mayfield Presbyterian Church, 22 N Main Street, Mayfield.

The highly anticipated annual Fall Harvest Cruise-In with music by Dan Lynaugh will be Saturday, Oct. 4, from 12 to 4 p.m.

Monday, Oct. 20, Mayfield Town Historian, Eric Close, will present "Sir William Johnson and the Founders of Mayfield" at 6:30 p.m. at the Mayfield Presbyterian Church, 22 N Main Street, Mayfield.

A holiday favorite, the Annual Christmas Open House at The Rice Homestead will be Saturday, Dec. 6 from noon to 4 p.m. A vintage holiday experience with homemade pies, cookies and mulled cider to sample, crackling fires and holiday home tours.

The Rice Homestead's 2025 summer exhibit will be "Echoes of Yesterday - The Clothing Collection of the Mayfield Historical Society." The Rice Homestead is open for tours Wednesdays and Saturdays from noon to 4 p.m. beginning June 14 through Aug. 30. Tours can also be made by appointment.

Many thanks to all the volunteers and public for supporting us. If you would like to get involved, please contact us on Facebook or email – Mayfieldhistoricalsociety@gmail.com

Bob Suits, President
"Like" us at
www.facebook.com/ricehomestead/!

EDITOR'S MESSAGE



ERIC CLOSE
MAYFIELD TOWN HISTORIAN

IF YOU ARE NOT ON FACEBOOK, YOU CAN FIND SOME OF MY WORK PUBLISHED ON THE MAYFIELD TOWN WEBSITE. I PUBLISH A WEEKLY MEMORIAL ON THE FACEBOOK PAGE, IN HONOR OF A CITIZEN OF MAYFIELD WHO HAS PASSED AWAY. YOU CAN FIND THESE ON THE HISTORY SECTION OF THE TOWN WEBSITE, UNDER THE LINK OF "[Town Historian's Digital Archives](#)" THE LINK TO THE WEEKLY MEMORIALS CAN BE FOUND AT THE TOP OF THE PAGE.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO HAVE A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND HONORED IN THIS MANNER, PLEASE CONTACT ME. – HISTORIAN@MAYFIELDNY.ORG

(518) 774 -0703



THE MAYFIELD CHICKENS

Base Ball Club

c1885

Front Row: Frank Goodemote,
John Roberts, Mac Danforth

Back Row: Henry Hartin, Baltus
Dixon, Dewitt Hartin, William
Thompson, Merl Haines, Simeon
Christie

The Mayfield Nine, who travelled this area playing the other Clubs at Gloversville, Johnstown, Denton's Corners (Osborn Bridge). A ball grounds in Mayfield was mentioned in the newspapers of the day but did not specify where. At one time, there was a ball field in Riceville, as well as next to the cemetery on Woodside Ave.

ONGOING PROJECTS

- Drafting designs for more historical markers
- Mapping out land patents and lots for deed traceability
- Researching Revolutionary War events around Mayfield
- Drafting a memorial plaque for America's 250th birthday
- Compiling records of the lost Sacandaga Valley
- Establishing signage for Mayfield's hamlets, rural & historical communities
- Compiling records of the Mayfield Volunteer Fire Department
- Transcribing the Town of Mayfield's meeting minutes (1794-1825)
- Compiling a complete history of Mayfield's School Districts
- Compiling a complete history of Mayfield's churches and cemeteries

HOW MAYFIELD GOT ITS SHAPE

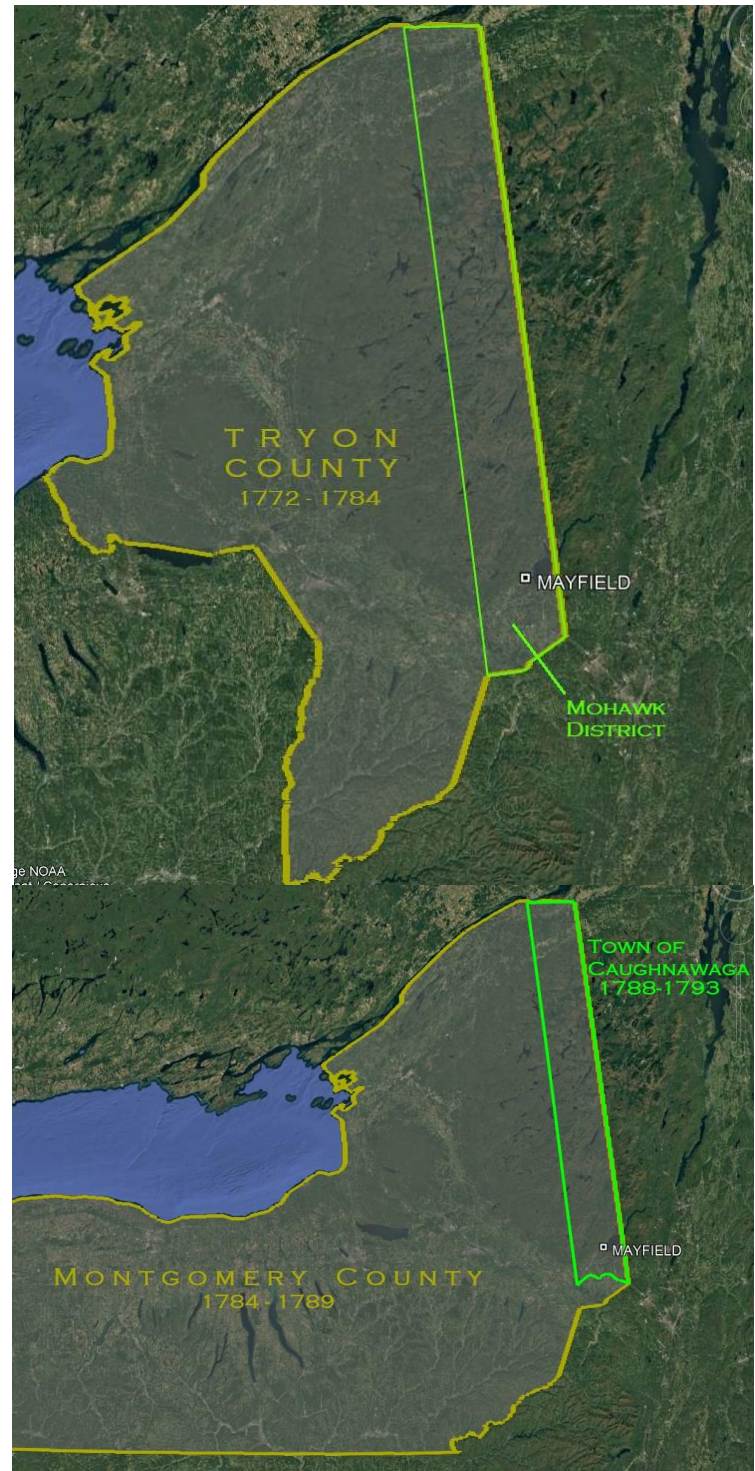
The town of Mayfield was organized on April 1st, 1794. Some concerned citizens of this nearly unbroken wilderness met at the Baptist's log meeting house about a half mile west of the 9 Mile tree. At this meeting, the first officers of the Town were elected. Although this was the first such meeting, the town of Mayfield had actually been established over a year prior.

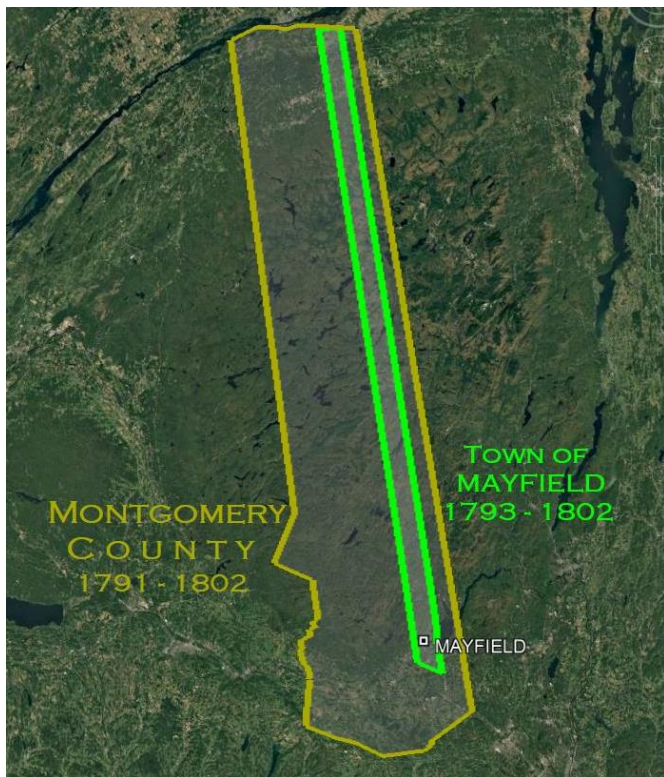
March 12th, 1793, is the date that the town of Caughnawaga was dissolved and divided to establish the towns of Johnstown, Amsterdam, Mayfield, and Broadalbin. The town of Caughnawaga was short-lived. It was established in 1788 from the old Mohawk District of Tryon County.

The Mohawk district was Mayfield's "granddaddy," so to speak. This territory was the easternmost of Tryon County's five districts. Its eastern border was the present eastern borders of Fulton and Montgomery Counties. Its western border was a line parallel to the east border, and it intersected the Mohawk River at "the noses." The only effective form of government operating in these districts was the Tryon County Committee of Safety. During the Revolutionary War, each of the five districts organized into a regiment of the Tryon County Militia. The Mohawk District was the 3rd Regiment.

In 1788, a New York State Law was adopted that divided all of the land within this state into townships, regardless if the land was inhabited. The Mohawk district became defunct, and the land was divided to create two of these new towns. The land of this district, south of the Mohawk River, was established as the town of Mohawk (presently the towns of Glen, Charleston, Florida, and part of Root), and the land north of the river was established as the town of Caughnawaga.

"Caughnawaga" is a Mohawk word meaning "at the rapids," which describes the location of their old namesake village near the present site of Fonda. In the 1790 census, nearly 4,200 residents were recorded in the town, including nearly 100 slaves. Population centers in this town were few and far between, and therefore, the division was made for the localities to better govern themselves.





At the time of its establishment and organization, the town of Mayfield was unrecognizable in comparison with today. Not only in the sense that it was nearly a wilderness, but also in consideration of its geographic boundaries.

The most obvious change in the town of Mayfield since its establishment is its size. Although the east and west boundary lines of the town have remained in the same place, its northern and southern boundaries have changed. In the 1790s, the Adirondack Mountains were a mostly uninhabited wilderness, with very small pockets of struggling settlements. Amazingly enough, at that time, the Town of Mayfield theoretically shared its northern border with Canada.

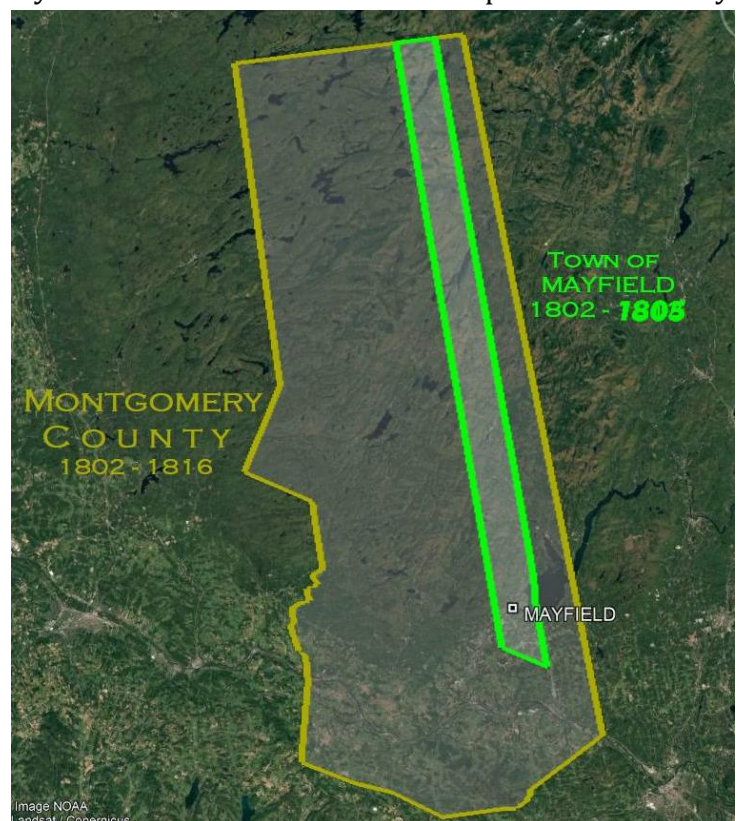
The area of Lake Pleasant was settled in about 1795, and the village of Wells was first settled in about 1798. These areas were in an isolated and harsh section of the Adirondack wilderness. Even in the 1820s, it was written of this place that

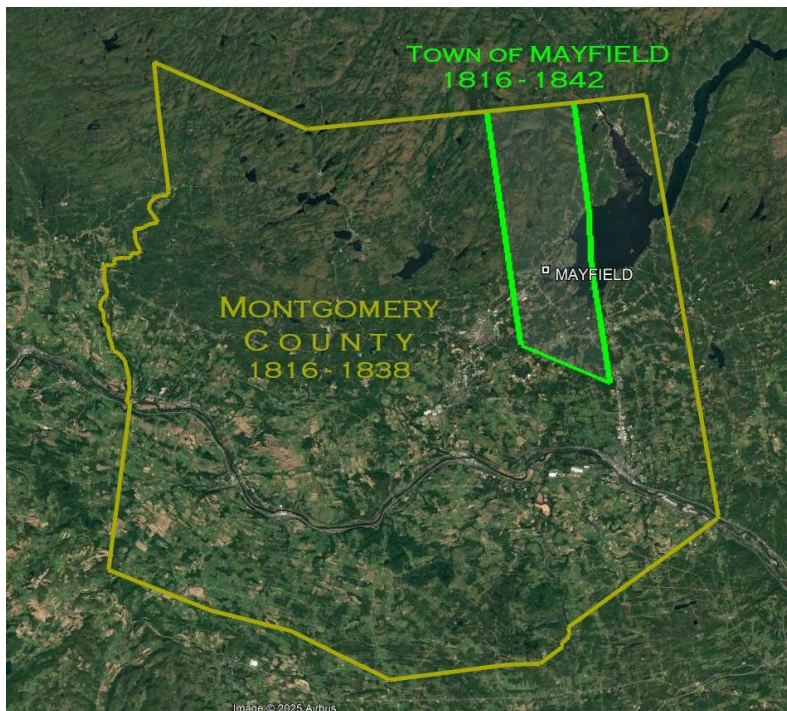
"It is a wild waste of mountain and swamp lands...Little is known of the country, except that it is so poor in general that nobody inclines to settle in it."

These settlements, far isolated from their administrative center at Mayfield, split off and formed their own townships. In 1802, St. Lawrence County was created, which moved Mayfield's border south from Canada to what would be Hamilton County's north line. On May 28, 1805, the Town of Wells was established. This moved Mayfield's Northern boundary further south to near where Hope Center is today. No longer were these isolated residents obliged to travel some 20 to 30 miles to the heart of Mayfield to have their concerns dealt with. In all reality, this isolated territory likely acted under its own accord and outside of Mayfield's administrative jurisdiction. No references are made to this area in the surviving town meeting minutes, which date from 1794 to 1805.

In the following decade, the northern boundary of Mayfield was moved twice more. On June 19th, 1812, the town of Lake Pleasant was set off from the Town of Wells. Having lost some of its northern territory, Wells annexed a northern section of Mayfield, pushing the boundary south once again.

In 1816, Hamilton County was organized, and the Town of Wells annexed all remaining portions of the towns of Mayfield and Northampton north of the new County line. Much of this territory became the town of Hope in 1822.





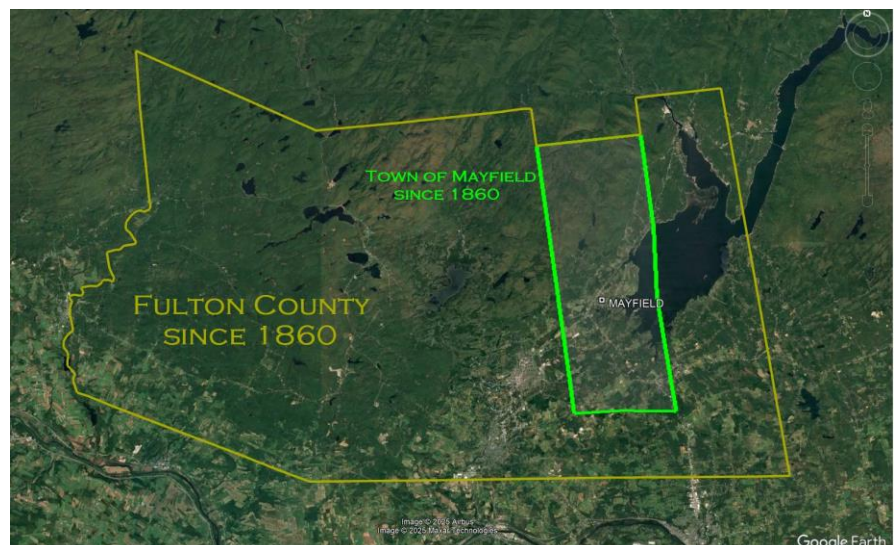
Johnstown had always been the seat of Montgomery County; evidently so, as the host to the historic old County Courthouse and Jail, which date to the formation of Tryon County in 1772. Johnstown not only served an important role in colonial New York but also was at the heart of an entire theatre of the Revolutionary War. Despite the prominence and rich history of Johnstown, it was stripped of its honor as the county seat. In 1836, the county seat was moved, and the new Montgomery County courthouse was erected in the village of Fonda. This was due in part to Fonda's location on both the Erie Canal (1825) and a new railroad built in 1835. This change motivated the county's northern area residents to act and protect their interests.

In 1838, Montgomery County was split nearly in half, and from it, Fulton County was established, with Johnstown restoring its honor as the county seat. This new County line cut off a northern section of the town of Amsterdam, and that territory was reorganized as the town of Perth. The changes to the towns of both counties can be seen in the 1829 map of Montgomery County, and the 1839 map of Fulton and Montgomery Counties (linked below.) In 1842, the town of Perth, which was a small sliver in the southeast corner of Fulton County, annexed southern

portions of the towns of Mayfield and Broadalbin to gain a more favorable territory.

The town of Mayfield reached its final and present shape in 1860. On April 6th of that year, Hamilton County took a bite out of Fulton County, annexing a northern section of the town of Mayfield. This section, as well as about two-thirds of the town of Hope, was set off to create the town of Benson. Much of this land was along the west Stony Creek, which was much isolated from the rest of Mayfield, and only accessible through Tomantown.

Since 1860, the borders of Mayfield town have been set in stone. However, within the town's boundaries, to say much has changed would be a gross understatement.



A Ghost of the Past

ANTHONYVILLE



You can find many historical markers scattered across the town of Mayfield. On a long, fast stretch of State Highway 30, one such little blue and yellow marker pokes out at the intersection of Blowers Road.

The site is easy to miss. The area is particularly rural, and nothing else really stands out that would signify such a place was once called Anthonyville.

For about a century, ending a century ago, Anthonyville was a well-known section of this town. Its residents made great contributions to industry and everyday life. In comparison with all aspects of its heyday, the area is unrecognizable today.

The story of Anthonyville begins with the creek itself, long before it was ever called the Anthony Creek. Early records are incomplete, but as far as can be ascertained, in about 1802 or '03 a sawmill was constructed on the creek, which was dammed to make a mill pond, reportedly by a Mr. Green. By 1806, The Sawmill passed into the hands of Robert Wheaton, where records of the town's Road districts describe the location as "Wheaton's Sawmill."

In 1807, the mill and associated property was acquired by Lebbeus Barton, formerly of Connecticut. The family settled on the hill south of the creek and the enterprises there were subsequently expanded.

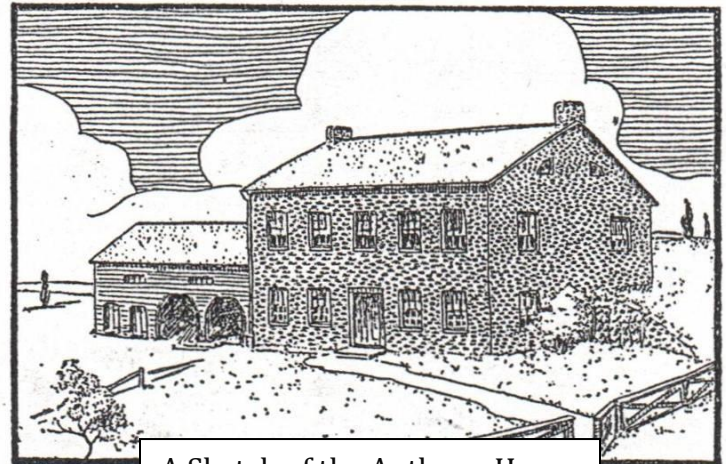
In about 1816 or '17, the Barton family erected a brick house, the third of such construction erected in this town (although the marker incorrectly states it was the first brick house. The McKinley Brick House was built in 1805, and the Van Buren house in 1812, both still standing) The house no longer stands, which was a two-story brick structure thirty by forty feet in size and facing the south.

In about 1820, Mr. Barton built a carding mill. It was the only such mill of its type in the town of Mayfield, which mechanically aligned the fibers in sheep's wool to prepare it for spinning. Almost every family had sheep for this purpose-wool clothing.

By 1821 Esek Mosher had taken over this property along with the mills, leaving no trace of Lebbeus Barton in the records. Shortly thereafter, the land came into possession of Benjamin Anthony.

Benjamin Anthony was a Quaker, otherwise known as a member of the Society of Friends. He moved from Milton, NY to Mayfield prior to 1820. He was undoubtedly drawn here by the growing community of Quakers. Mr. Anthony acquired a farm near the east end of what is now Brower Road, where he operated his blacksmith forge.

"My uncle Benjamin, who was doing black-smithing about a mile to the east with a hand bellows, saw in this [Lebbeus Barton's] mill pond the possibility of pumping his bellows by water, also running a trip hammer to pound his iron. This will explain why he bought the property. He at once built a blacksmith shop to the east of the pond and a wagon shop near it, both of which were south-east of the house.



A Sketch of the Anthony Home

As long as I can remember there was also a saw mill a few rods more to the east of the house run by water from the north-east point of the mill pond in a ditch or mill race. The water used in running the shop came from a flume at the south-east of the pond.

The sun can never shine brighter nor the blue-birds sing sweeter than when we used to play in the old saw mill or run about the mill yard gathering spruce gum from the logs that had been drawn on sleighs in winter to be sawed later when the water could be spared.

To the west of the mill pond a few rods, was still another pond that flowed over a dam into our pond. This water privilege was owned by a Mr. Simeon Davis, a natural scold, and disagreeable neighbor. His voice was often on such a high key we could distinguish which particular boy was being lectured, as the sound came down the water to the east. He had five boys but no girls. They all ran away from home as soon as they were able to earn their own living, and no one was surprised at this.

Mr. Davis owned a small farm which he tilled in connection with his water power a few rods to the west of us. With power from his pond he ran a turning lathe, and mill for making rakes, and other wood-en things. It was here our family bought their handles for hoes, pitchforks and knives. I used to pity his wife and boys too, our father was so different.

All the other neighbors were farmers, the most of them owning their homes. Our farm consisted of nearly a hundred acres and we usually kept two horses, about four cows, sometimes a few sheep, also pigs, and poultry. We always raised all kinds of vegetables, which were kept in bins made along the north side of the cellar wall. We had almost no fruit trees, but were kept supplied by farmers with apples and other fruit, they were only too glad to exchange them for work done in the shop, instead of paying in money."

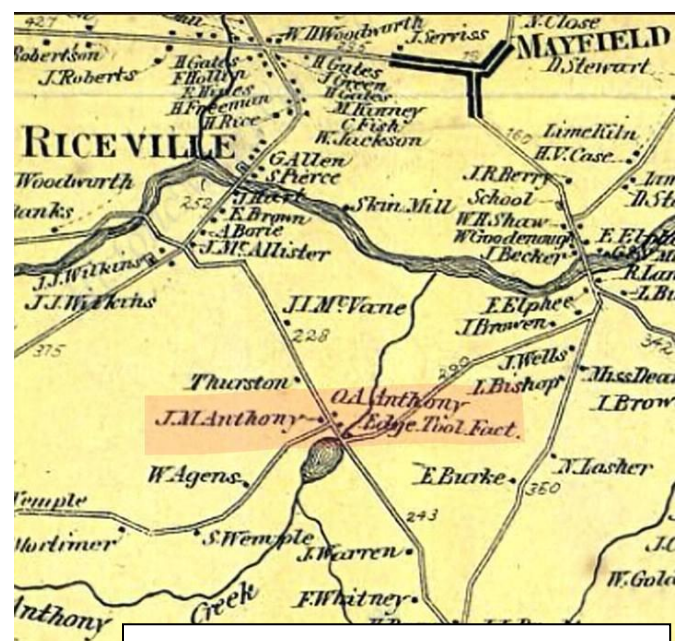
~Hannah Green Streeter, 1911

Benjamin Anthony died of typhoid fever in 1829, leaving a widow with five young children. At this time, Benjamin's brother, John Mason Anthony, answered the call of responsibility and love for family. He moved to Mayfield and took up his older brother's business and supported his widow and her children—while raising a family of his own—until they could provide for themselves. One of these children grew up working hard, captained a company of soldiers in the Civil War, and eventually became the Governor of Kansas.

John Anthony purchased the mills and property on April 1, 1833, as his brother's widow and children returned to Saratoga County. With his sons, Mr. Anthony carried on the farm, trip hammer shop (iron works and blacksmithing business), milling, and making wagons.

Around 1835, the wagon shop burned to the ground, and after a great effort by the family, the equipment and most of the blacksmith shop was saved from the same fate. The incident hit the family hard, as there was no insurance in those days. They shouldered the burden and rebuilt the shops and carried on their businesses.

Oren Anthony, son of John, expressed his ability as a natural mechanic from a young age. By the age of 14, he was making axes on his father's anvil, and subsequently became involved in metalworking, making edge tools, and improving the designs of mechanical implements. He took over the Trip Hammer shop at a time when many edge tools were being manufactured in large scale factories, so Mr. Anthony focused on making knives used for leather dressing, which was a profitable venture for this area. He invented many useful machines and gadgets, which he



Anthonyville and vicinity from the 1868 Atlas of Fulton County

Looking Across the Anthony Pond from Blowers Rd.
Red Bunch is up and over the hill.



devised through the course of his career as a manufacturer. He made significant contributions to the armory in Ilion, NY, where he lived and worked briefly during the Civil War. Most notably, he invented and patented a tool in 1870 called the "Lifting Jack," which aided farmers in removing stones and stumps from the land.

In 1875, The Gloversville and Northville Railroad (later bought out by the F.J.&G.) commenced its operations. The tracks crossed the road within a quarter mile to the north of the Anthony Farm. Mr. Anthony capitalized on the opportunity and expanded his industrial pursuits.

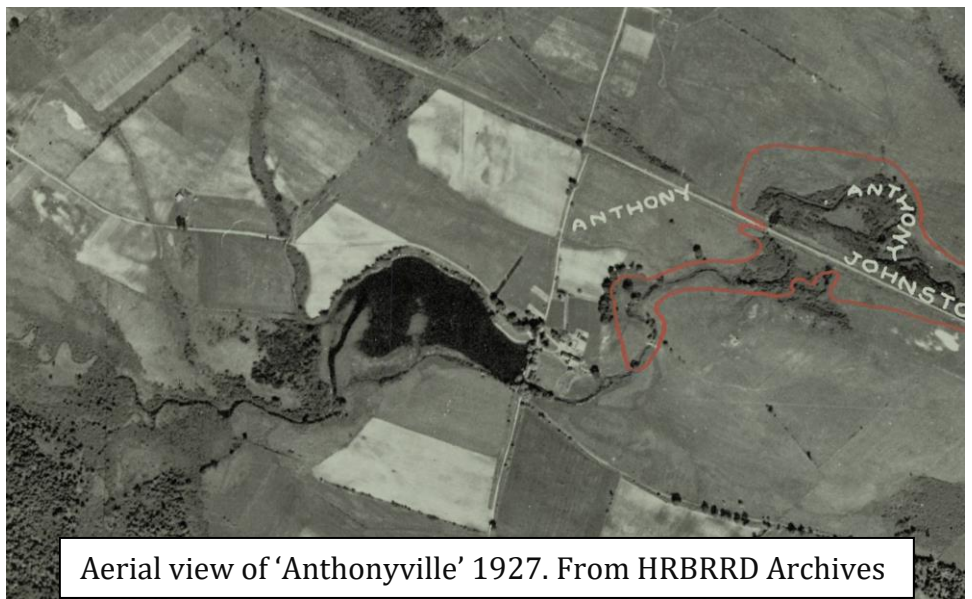
Mill ponds had a long-standing tradition of being used to harvest ice in the winter. The

Anthony's used their pond for this purpose. They cut and harvested ice from the pond, hauling it by horse-drawn cart to various ice houses in the area. The railroad allowed the business to reach further markets, and Oren Anthony became the largest ice dealer in Fulton County. Ice from Anthony's Pond was in particular demand because the water was clean and sourced from cold springs and the rural and woodland sections of town. Whereas most of the other Mill ponds in the area had been contaminated from chemicals used in tanning and other parts of the leather industry. In a time before the Advent of refrigeration, the ice industry was vital; and it put Anthonyville on the map.

According to The History of Montgomery and Fulton Counties, in 1878 the Hamlet contained "*the ironworks, carpenter and paint shops, and about eight dwellings.*" Although it had earned recognition as a "hamlet," Anthonyville never had any school, church, or other institutions other than the businesses operated by the Anthony family. It seems almost to have been an honorary title for the small rural neighborhood, bestowed in recognition of the mighty ambitions of a successful family.

The children of the Anthonyville area attended school in Riceville, about a mile to the north. The residents had a choice to attend any one of a half dozen churches in the vicinity, depending on their denomination. However, Anthonyville did acquire a "hand-me-down" church. From the 1820s through the 1860s, there was a Dutch Reformed Church at the four corners southwest of Munsonville (intersection Vandenburg Point Rd makes with Proper & Perrigo rds.) The church fell out of use and around 1868, the structure was "taken down and carried to Anthonyville, where it [was] used as a barn." F. W. Beers, 1878. It is unknown what came of this structure.

Oren Anthony was held in very high regard in Mayfield, and died without a single enemy in 1900. Upon his retirement a few years prior, the farm was taken over by his son. Mr. Ezra Anthony, the third generation of his family to



Aerial view of 'Anthonyville' 1927. From HRBRRD Archives



operate "Anthonyville," carried on principally as a farmer. He was a skilled mechanic like his father, Oren, but never operated the business to the same extent. Ezra was noted for having the best and most well-maintained implements of any farmer around, and undoubtedly carried out maintenance for others. He died in 1921 at the age of 64. The departure of Ezra Anthony also set the Anthony's enterprises to lay fallow. For the first time in nearly a century, the echoes of the trip hammer no longer rang out around the hollow.

For the Sacandaga Reservoir project of 1930, the Anthony Pond was let out and the Anthony Creek was let to drain naturally into the reservoirs. The name lived on, however, when the town of Mayfield formalized the names of its Town highways about a decade later. The road went southeast from the four corners where Riceville Road met Phelps Street and connected to Red Bunch corners a mile

and a half to the south. It was named the Anthony Pond Road. However, not even the road would last very long.

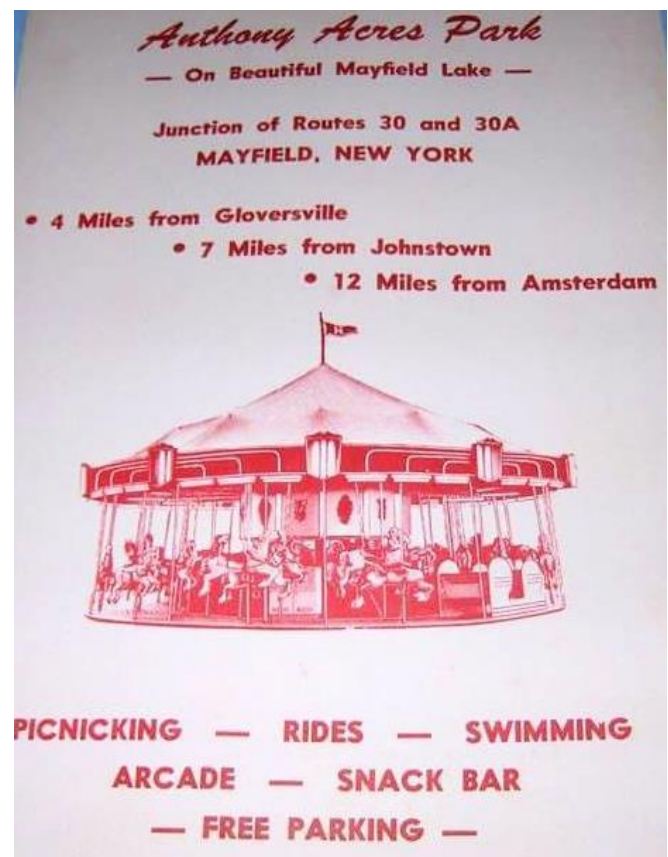
The little section of town once known as Anthonyville was forever changed when construction on the relocation project of State highway 30 began in early 1966. Prior to that time, Old State highway 30 coursed through the village of Mayfield before heading north to the Adirondack mountains. Changes were made to streamline the flow of traffic and avoid congestion in the village. With the relocation of this highway, the Anthony Pond Road was torn up and the landscape was graded for more gradual curves and subtler changes in elevation.

The last hurrah in the life of Anthonyville began on Memorial Day of 1968, the grand opening of the Anthony Acres Amusement Park. In February of 1967, Atty. and Mrs. Richard Lanzara purchased a 30-acre lot, formerly a part of the old Anthony Farm, and took advantage of the new infrastructure and location on Mayfield Lake to create a new summer haven. There was *"an arcade, merry-go-round, kiddie boat ride on wooden platforms, car and train rides, and a bath house."*

There was also a *"beach and picnic area. The beach, 100 feet wide, [stretched] along a 350-foot shoreline."*
~Leader Herald, Thursday, June 6, 1968

The park suddenly closed down after the summer of 1971. A few years later, Christmas trees were sold at the site, but since then, the Anthony name has faded from the map.

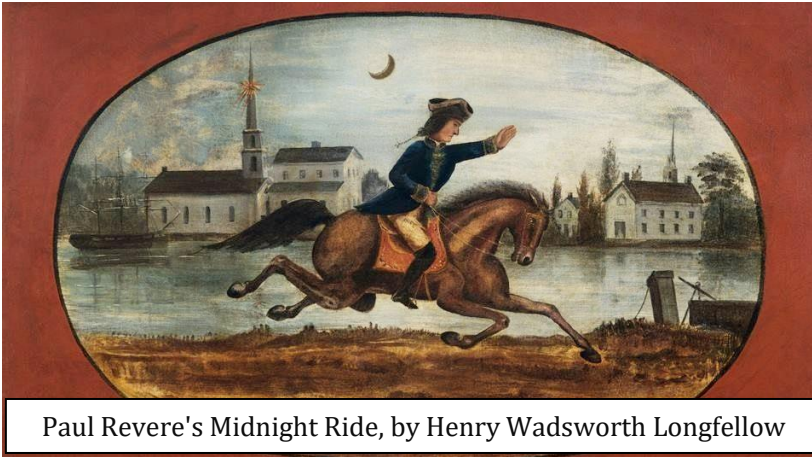
Today, on the site of the old brick house you will find the historical marker alongside a new block of Paul's Self Storage units, and the ruins of the old barn across the highway. Although Anthonyville is gone, the spirit of the Anthony Family will be remembered for all of the good they did in this town.



AMERICA 250

ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY

APRIL 19TH, 1775



Paul Revere's Midnight Ride, by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Late last night, Paul Revere made his midnight ride. "One if by land, two if by sea..."

The Patriots in Boston were keeping a watchful eye. After hanging two lanterns in the Old North Church, a signal was clandestinely sent out that the British Army was making their advance into the colony by way of the Charles River.

The Patriot militia in Concord, some 20 miles distant from Boston, were in possession of some cannons and an arsenal of weaponry. Colonial governor Gage received orders from

London to "act decisively," and the British regular army organized a raid confiscate the arms of the militia.

Before nightfall on the 18th, William Dawes set out on horseback to Lexington to alert John Hancock and Samuel Adams that the British were preparing to make their advance.

Near midnight, after seeing the signal in the Old North Church tower, Paul Revere rowed across the harbor to Charlestown and made his mad dash and alerted many bands of militia along the way.

The British had also sent out patrols to arrest any runners on horseback, so Revere proceeded through the night with great caution and had to ride much out of his way to avoid detection. He arrived in Lexington a few hours before dawn, and the militia made their preparations to receive the enemy.

Revere and Dawes then rode on to Concord but were captured by the British. However, one of their party escaped and made it to Concord to alert the militia.

Around 4:30 in the morning, the British regulars approached Lexington. Knowing of the presence of the militia there, Major Pitcairn ordered his troops to load their muskets. The major intended to march straight to Concord for their objective, however a young lieutenant at the front of the expedition steered the force of over 700 British regulars to confront the Patriot militia at Lexington.

There, in a field, the two forces began to exchange words as the tension escalated beyond control. British officers ordered the "rebels" and "villains" of the militia to drop their weapons and disperse. Of the many accounts taken that day, none of them seem to agree on what happened next.

A single shot was fired, and it is unknown by whom or on which side of the line they stood. The legendary moment is known as "The shot heard 'round the world," and it ultimately changed the world forever. The British regulars then opened fire on the Patriots as they dispersed and retreated into the woods. The British regrouped and continued their March toward Concord where they arrived at about 7:30 and destroyed the militia's cannons and ammunition.

Thanks in part to Revere, Militia from all over the area began to assemble and a battle ensued at Concord. Forces on both sides strengthened as word spread of a skirmish. The British gathered their wounded and began their withdrawal.

The British had amassed a strong force of about 1,500, but bands of Patriots continued to fire upon them all the way back to Boston. They arrived there in the late afternoon and made the final tally of 73 killed in action, 53 missing, and 174 wounded.

By the end of that day, the patriot Militia grew to a force of nearly 4,000. Five went missing, 39 were wounded, and 49 were killed in battle. Despite going against the greatest military force in the world, "farmers with guns" organized a remarkable response and embodied the phrase, "united we stand, divided we fall."

Retrospectively speaking, this was the first battle of the Revolutionary War. At the time it was just another confrontation between the angry colonists and their "oppressive rulers." This event, however, was more than significant. It was the spark that ignited a powder keg.

In the years leading up to this, Patriot-led shadow governments were forming in the colonies to take control from the royal governors. "Committees of Safety," as they were called, became crucial in the early years of the revolution to not only organize the cause of liberty, but form alliances with other communities. The Tryon County Committee of Safety was formed in August of 1774. Among its active members were names well known to this area, such as Sampson Sammons, Volkert Veeder, and John Fonda.

At this time, our little community of Mayfield was a very insignificant place. None of the names of its settlers are found in the minutes of the Tryon County Committee of Safety. The settlers in Mayfield, which numbered about a dozen families in 1775, were engaged in their own troubles: carving out a living from a desolate wilderness.

Tensions were rising in Tryon County, but conditions were still peaceful. But peace would not last in Tryon County, nor would peace last in Mayfield.

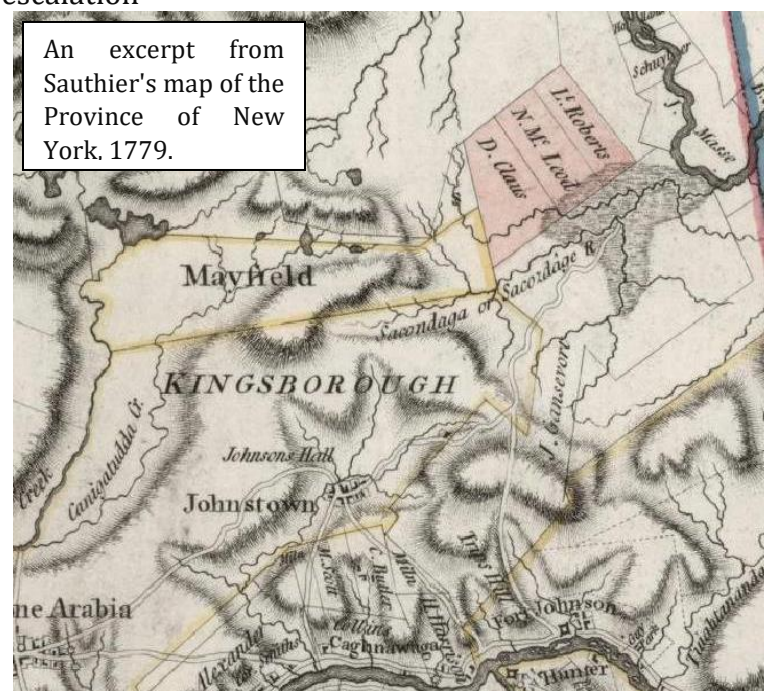
MAY 15, 1775:

On May 15, 1775, a crowd of three hundred Patriots gathered just west of Caughnawaga (Fonda) at the home of John Veeder and erected a liberty pole. It was an outward expression of their patriotism as well as a slanderous act toward the area's prominent loyalists. The passionate crowds were interrupted by the arrival of Sir John Johnson, Colonel Guy Johnson, and Colonel Daniel Claus, among other staunch Loyalists, who moved to disperse the crowd of rebels. Guy Johnson began a fiery speech, speaking down upon the rebels, speaking of the great power of the king and warning them to meet their upcoming fate. A young, stoic face in the crowd, Jacob Sammons, retorted to Johnson that he was "a liar and a villain." Guy Johnson was reported to have grabbed Sammons by his throat and returned the same insult, breaking into a scuffle at which point Sammons was whipped by one of the intruding loyalists. They then viciously beat Sammons with their clubs, and the first drops of blood saturated the soils of Tryon County. Fortunately, both parties managed to disperse without further escalation.

JUNE 25, 1775:

Two whole months of fighting had come and gone by this point. After the battles of Lexington and Concord, the siege of Boston began. On June 14, 1775, the Continental Congress established a new Continental Army, appointing General George Washington as the commander-in-chief. This brought the thirteen colonies together to begin organizing the full scale war with England--united we stand, divided we fall.

Here, in New York's frontiers of Tryon County, the long-simmering pot was rousing up to a rolling boil. There was a very clear divide in attitudes and loyalty among the residents of the Mohawk, Schoharie, and Sacandaga Valleys.



An excerpt from Sauthier's map of the Province of New York, 1779.

The Tryon County Committee of Safety formed in August of 1774 as a means for the aspirants of Liberty to organize their communities against the King's tyrannical oppression. In the first meeting the committee proclaimed,

"That the Act for blocking up the port of Boston is oppressive and arbitrary, injurious in its principles, and particularly oppressive to the inhabitants of Boston, who we consider as brethren suffering in the common cause.

That we will unite and join with the different districts of this county, in giving whatever relief it is in our power to the poor distressed inhabitants of Boston, and that we will join and unite with our brethren of the rest of this colony in anything tending to support and defend our rights and liberties."

Following the outbreak of war, the committee began to meet regularly, almost on a weekly basis, to discuss the increasing tensions in Tryon County. The names of local patriot families are well represented in these records, many of which are alive and well in this area today, including: Fonda, Sammons, Veeder, Putman, Dygert, Herkimer, and many more. The records reflect the men of these names discussing their response to the actions and words of this county's Loyalist leaders, including Sir John Johnson, Col. Guy Johnson, Col. Daniel Claus, and Sheriff Alexander White.

After Tryon County was created in 1772, Governor William Tryon appointed Alexander White to the position of Royal Sheriff, the first such Sheriff in this county's long history. Sheriff White was described in the meeting minutes as a "violent Tory," who on many occasions taunted the patriots of the valleys, threatening to hang all of the traitors acting against the will of The King, expressing his aspirations to destroy families such as the Fondas, and even making vicious threats against a young boy with his pistol cocked and shoved in his chest, scolding, "you damned rebel, if you say one more word, I'll blow your brains out! (From sworn testimony, given under oath by William Seeber of Canajoharie, 26th of August 1775; Meeting Minutes of the Tryon County Committee of Safety.)

Near Caughnawaga, just to the east of John Veeder and his proud liberty pole, lived John Fonda. They both farmed the flats on the north side of the Mohawk River, and Fonda's farm contained some land in the vicinity of what is now the Montgomery County Courthouse in the village of Fonda.

So, on this day in history, June 25, 1775, John Fonda was working alongside one of his meadows, sowing a crop of peas, and working the ground with a hoe. From the trail appeared Thomas Hunt, a servant of the Royal Sheriff Alexander White. Hunt was wielding a brush scythe, likely trimming along the public path. Hunt approached Fonda, who ordered Hunt to use the footpath along the fence and not to tread upon the soil and damage his crop. Hunt spitefully resisted Fonda's order and approached him upon the cropland anyway, raising his scythe to strike Fonda.

In defense, Fonda swung his hoe, striking Hunt and knocking him to the ground. Upon regaining his footing, Hunt threatened that blow would be the death of Fonda, (From sworn testimony, given under oath by John Fonda of Caughnawaga, 25th of August 1775; Meeting Minutes of the Tryon County Committee of Safety.) The two men parted ways, and Hunt undoubtedly scurried off to the sheriff. Not long after, Sheriff Alexander White arrested John Fonda and confined him in the Johnstown Jail. This would be a point of no return for peace in Tryon County.

Fortunately, no signs of aggression at this point were recorded in the Mayfield settlement. In the spring of 1775, settlers here were too deeply engaged in setting up their homesteads and planting their crops to have a chance at survival on their relatively new section of the County.



The old Johnstown (Tryon County) Jail, built in 1772.
(Image from Wikipedia)

The Lost Sacandaga Valley

ELIPHAZ DAY and his NAMESAKE TOWN



Eliphaz Day came to the Sacandaga River Valley in 1805. At that time, the area was still sparsely settled and the river flowed wild and free. He capitalized on both his ambition and the vast opportunities of the frontier.

Mr. Day immediately entered the lumbering business along the Sacandaga River. He was an “active, stirring, [and] energetic businessman,” and became a noted lumber dealer in the valley. He learned the volatile nature of the River—its trends, ebbs, and flows—and used that knowledge to his advantage. In the dry season, he had many of the fine pines of the valley cut and had them drawn to the riverside. When the spring floods came, the rising waters would carry off the logs downstream. At the lower Falls of the Hudson, Mr. Day would fit

these logs into crude rafts and ultimately send them south from Albany on the tides of the lower Hudson River.

A surviving story about his lumbering exploits relates a time when, arriving in New York on such a log raft, Mr. Day lost control and had been swept toward the open ocean. Drifting beyond the piers as the tides receded, he used every signal and shout possible to alert the pier of his dire situation. Before the raft was carried to sea and destroyed by the waves, they were miraculously saved. The life of a lumber driver was perilous to say the least.

Early on, Mr. Day courted and married Sophia Rockwell and had six children. The Day family were affluent members of the community and were well respected in the Sacandaga Valley. Mr. Day was also the part owner of a mill on the Sacandaga River, whose operation was vital to the self-sufficiency of the early River communities.

In 1819, the towns of Edinburg and Hadley partitioned off some of their lands to form a new township, and the Town of Concord was established. In 1820, Eliphaz Day was elected the first supervisor for the town of Concord, a position which he held through 1826.

In the Spring of 1827, Mr. Day set off with a load of logs on the flow of the Sacandaga River. It was said that “he was engaged in driving logs at the horse-race, near Conklingville, and attempted to pass down the river in a boat. It is supposed a floating log or hidden rock broke one of his oars, or knocked it from his grasp, the boat



Driving logs on the Hudson River. Courtesy of the Adirondack History Museum. c1890s

became unmanageable, upset, and he was drowned.”

The Saturday evening edition of the NEW-YORK AMERICAN, June 9, 1827 reported that, “The body of Eliphaz Day, of Concord, Saratoga county, was found in the river, below Jesup's Landing, on the 24th ult. Mr. Day was drowned by the upsetting of a skiff on the 19th of April.”

The town fathers in Concord at that time had been engaged in changing the town's name, as there already was a Concord town in the western part of the state. It was then decided that to honor the life and legacy of one of the town's late founders and most prominent residents, the town of Concord was re-christened as the “Town of Day.”

Ernest Hemingway famously said that every man has two deaths. When he is buried in the ground, and the last time someone says his name. With his untimely death on the Sacandaga River, Eliphaz Day was granted the honor of immortality. So, with that, I welcome you to the Town of Day.

ELIPHAZ DAY
(1776 - 1827)

References:

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by NATHANIEL BARTLETT SYLVESTER

1878

Learn more at:

www.townofday.com

The Lost Sacandaga Valley @ Facebook.com

