

Orientation Program

Chronology

Post Ice Age	Wood Creek formed
Paleo-Indian Iroquois habitation	The Carrying Place: De O Wain Sta - The landings
1755	Fort Bull
1756	Destruction of Fort Bull
1756	Fort Wood Creek
1758	Fort Stanwix
1758	Bradstreet's Frontenac Expedition
1760	The Carry's First Business Wagon conveyance of boats and cargo
1777	Leger's Approach and Retreat on Wood Creek
1790	Lot 98, Fonda's Patent Struck off, includes Ft. Bull and present Village site
1797	Western Inland Lock Navigation Company
1802	Locks on Wood Creek
1817-25	Clinton's Ditch Wood Creek Aqueduct
1844	Enlarged Erie Wood Creek Culvert Waste Weir Matteson Farm
1852	Lot 98 in 1852 A Lumber Business (?)
1874	Brainards Bridge Farm
1918	The Demise of the Enlarged Erie
?	Brickyard (?)
?	Farm
1967	Historic Rome Development Authority
1973	Erie Canal Village

The purpose of the orientation program is to heighten visitor curiosity about the Canal Village by presenting the history of this site.

Erie Canal Village Site

This piece of land, Lot 98 of the old George Clinton tract, has seen clusters of buildings come and go as have the old waterways that criss-cross it. At the entrance to the Village is a canal road bridge. There was always a bridge here. The bed of the original lies below in the mud; the far abutment is original. The old bridge was called "Brainard's Bridge" after a farmer who lived nearby. Brainard is a name associated with the canal. Jeremiah Brainard, a Roman, invented a fine wheelbarrow for use in constructing Clinton's Ditch.

Brainard's bridge spanned the Enlarged Erie, a seventy-five foot wide ribbon of level water that ran to Albany and the Hudson River in the east, to Buffalo and Lake Erie to the west. Two miles of it have been dredged for the Canal Village. Abandoned after the larger Barge Canal took its place in 1918, much of the old bed was filled in and obliterated. Here, the bed was in good shape, but had grown to trees and brush. The waste weir, which spills excess water out of the canal, was rebuilt at its location near Fort Bull road. The canal obtains its water from Wood Creek, which is let into it from the eastern end. The Enlarged Erie, brought to this area around 1844, was dug wider and deeper than the original Erie (often referred to as Clinton's Ditch after the Governor who authorized its opening).

On this tract of land, three old waterways all run within a quarter of a mile of each other. At this point and at many others along the route of the Erie, the Enlarged Erie separates from Clinton's Ditch. The Ditch (begun in 1817) may be seen running through the middle of the Village. It must have veered around an obstacle, for it joins the Enlarged Erie route at either end of the Village.

Behind the Shull house is the earliest water route, Wood Creek.

The old bed, with some water in it still runs by the earthworks of Fort Bull. This French and Indian War fort was built in 1755 to protect the Wood Creek watercourse. Narrow and unseemly as it is, Wood Creek, before the building of Clinton's Ditch, had seen countless military and commercial vessels on its waters rubbing against its banks and shallow bottom. Bad as it was, it was often preferable to the Oswego and Mohawk roads which for a hundred and fifty years were narrow, muddy paths through hostile forests.

Fort Bull was a much used landing place for vessels proceeding east. A three mile portage by wagon brought them to the Mohawk. West bound vessels would be brought here in high water season or four miles further to Fort Rickey in dry. Some sixteen bateaux are believed sunk just beyond Fort Bull. This occurred when Frenchmen destroyed Fort Bull in 1756. Virtually all of the sixty man colonial garrison died here.

Wood Creek even had its own locks, or devices to improve navigation. One of them was near where Fort Bull Road crosses the Enlarged Erie at the Village's western end.

NEW YORK STATE MUSEUM OF CHEESE

This building was built in 1862, in Verona, NY, by Gardner Weeks and was known as the Weeks & Merry factory. Mr. Gottlieb Merry purchased the factory in 1869, and ran it until his death, when it was taken over by his son, Frederick. It is a handsome example of early factory construction. It measures 90' x 34' and has three stories. It is one of the largest and oldest cheese factories in the state. Cheese was made in this factory until 1917.

This is the "make-room" where the cheese was made. The milk was brought to the factory in horse-drawn wagons, by the farmers between 5 & 8 AM. The cans of milk were lifted from the wagons by a windless which was mounted over the receiving window. The milk was then poured into the weigh can which sat on a platform scale. It was then weighed & recorded. At this time a sample was taken (about one oz.), with a "thief" or dipper, and this put into a sample bottle. This sample was tested for the butterfat content of the milk. Each farmer had his own sample bottle which was numbered; the farmers were paid by weight and butterfat content.

Then the valve of the can (called a weigh can gate) was opened and the milk ran into the vat until it was full, where the milk was heated. Each vat held about 5,000 pounds of milk. Between the wooden part of the vat and the tin lining there was an open space which was filled with water. The water was heated by steam coming through perforated pipes running through this space the entire length of the vat. The warm water surrounding the tin lining gradually raised the temperature of the milk. The required temperature was between 82 and 86 degrees.

The next step was to ascertain if the milk was in a condition ripe enough to add the "rennet." Rennet is an ingredient used to convert raw milk into cheese. The "rennet test" was the most satisfactory way to find out the ripeness of the milk.

If the cheese was to be colored, the coloring extract was put into the milk and well mixed at least ten minutes before adding the rennet.

When the curd was set, it was ready to cut. For cutting two different knives were used. One horizontal and one perpendicular. The curd was cut lengthwise and crosswise in the vat with each knife. It was usually an hour and a half from the time heat was applied to the vat until the curd was cut.

After cutting the curd was gently stirred to prevent it from settling to the bottom of the vat and matting together. The stirring allowed the curd to shrink and expel the "whey." It was done with a hand tool called a "curd rake". After stirring, a process called "cooking the curd" took place, for about one hour. About two to four hours elapsed from the beginning of cooking until the whey was drawn. The whey was piped outside to a whey tank where the farmers took it home to feed their pigs.

As the whey passed off and the curd became dry, it matted together and was then cut into pieces piled one on top of the other in one end of the vat. The curd was turned so that excess moisture would be expelled. The curd was then ready to be ground in a "curd mill" and salted, using 2-2 3/4 lbs. of salt to 1,000 lbs. of milk. Then it was ready to press. It was dipped from the vat with a flat-sided curd pail, measured equally into hoops which were immediately placed in the press and pressure applied. They were kept under pressure 16-18 hours, then taken out of the hoops and taken upstairs by elevator to the curing room. This room was kept between 65 and 75 degrees, and well ventilated. The cheeses were turned every morning, kept clean, and remained there an average of 3-4 weeks. Then they were boxed and shipped. A 60-lb. cheddar was made here, principally for export.

The cheesemaker had an office in the factory where he kept records of receipts and payments. The testing equipment was also kept here. When this factory was built, farmers were being paid by the weight of the milk alone. As time went by, the butterfat test was introduced. Farmers were then paid by weight and butterfat content. Mr. Merry used these new innovations to produce a better product.

CHEESE MUSEUM

VOCABULARY

- ANNATTO A dye of reddish yellow made from the pulp around the seeds of a tropical tree. Used for coloring cheese, butter, etc.
- BABCOCK BUTTERFAT TEST - 1890 Method devised for testing the butterfat content of milk.
- BATTEN A strip of wood put over a seam between boards as a fastening or covering.
- CENTRIFUGE A machine using centrifugal force to separate particles of cream from milk.
- CONDUCTOR A tin receptacle used to guide milk into vat.
- CURD Any coagulated substance. The coagulated part of milk from which cheese is made; forms when milk sours.
- HOOP A mold; wooden or steel
- PLATFORM SCALE A scale with a stand to hold weigh can.
- RENNET A substance to curdle milk as in the making of cheese. The membrane lining the stomach of an unweaned animal; an extract of this stomach; causes coagulation. (Now man-made)
- VAT A large tub-like container used to hold milk for ripening.
- WEIGH CAN A can used for weighing.
- Whey The thin watery part of milk, that separates from the thicker part (curd) after coagulation.
- WINDLESS A winding device; a simple kind of winch worked by a crank for lifting.

NEW YORK STATE MUSEUM OF CHEESE

OUTSIDE FEATURES

The outside construction of the building is board and batten.

The wagons carrying the milk could approach the factory by means of a road which enabled them to stop at the receiving window where the milk was unloaded.

The pond was spring fed and used to supply water to the factory. On factory's original site, the pond was situated higher.

The shutters and the cupola were used to regulate the temperature inside the factory. The doors on the second floor were loading doors, where the cheese was loaded into the wagons for delivery to the railroad station.

FORT BULL

Prior to the Erie Canal (1825), control of the vital Oneida Carrying Place (portage) at the site of present Rome, meant domination of the only low level, east-west water route between the St. Lawrence River and Northern Georgia. The local portage, about two miles long, combined eastward-flowing Mohawk River with westward Wood Creek.

To guard this strategic place, the English, in the French and Indian Wars, built five forts at The Carry---Craven and Williams on the Mohawk, Bull and Fort Rickey at Wood Creek (Erie Canal Village) and Newport midway between. After the French destroyed Fort Bull in 1756, the British razed the other three works and retreated down the Mohawk Valley to German Flatts (Herkimer), the vital passageway being undefended. Later the British returned and built Fort Stanwix, a large permanent fortification to replace the four earlier forts. (Fort Stanwix has been rebuilt (1976) and stands on its original site in downtown Rome).

Fort Bull, a star-shaped fort made of heavy pickets, 15 to 18 feet long, upright in the ground, guarded the lower landing place on Wood Creek, where cargoes were loaded on boats after being hauled by land over The Carry, for passage to Oswego and Lake Ontario.

Fort Bull fell to a French and Indian detachment on March 27, 1756, in one of the most brilliant raids in American military history. Commanded by Lt. Gaspard DeLery, a regular engineer officer, the expedition came from Montreal up the St. Lawrence River to La Presentation (Ogdensburg) and then by way of the Black River Valley and the Rome-Boonville Gorge to the Oneida Carry.

Here in less than four hours, the French captured Fort Bull and its garrison. Those that survived were taken back to Canada as prisoners.

DeLery's force consisted of 15 officers, two cadets, 76 regulars and 166 Canadian militia, plus 103 Indians, a total of 362. While his men reduced the fort, his Indians blocked the road over the Carry, turning back a relief party from Fort Williams.

His losses were reported as one soldier and one Indian killed, five men wounded.

In addition to the British killed at Fort Bull, DeLery's Indians killed several of the advancing relief party, the number never confirmed.

While at Wood Creek the French destroyed an excess amount of powder and other war material, much of it thrown into the Creek alongside many sunken batteaux, some loaded and ready to leave for Oswego.

It is reported that while soldiers were searching for loot, an Indian wandered into a powder magazine carrying a torch, blowing up much of the fort and injuring at least two of the French.

DeLery returned to Montreal, taking his prisoners along, some dying on the way.

The British General Webb, in command of the upper Mohawk Valley, ordered Fort Bull replaced by a new work, called Fort Wood Creek. Before it could be completed, the French captured Oswego (where they did not stay) and Webb ordered Fort Wood Creek and the other forts at The Carry to be destroyed, retreating to German Flatts, (Herkimer). For this he was soon replaced and a new and much larger fortification ordered built at The Carry---Ft. Stanwix.

The earthworks now seen in the rear of Erie Canal Village are the best preserved of all the untouched French and Indian War forts. No visit to the Erie Canal Village should be complete without standing on the sacred soil of Fort Bull. (For further information, read Gilbert Hagerty's "Massacre at Fort Bull".)

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Erie Canal Museum

This museum gives a brief history of the Erie Canal. Completed in 1825, the Canal was the first major internal improvement in the United States and is, perhaps, the greatest single achievement of the people of New York State. The canal connected the Great Lakes with the Atlantic. This enabled products of both geographical areas to be traded easily which vastly increased commerce and growth within the State.

The choice of a waterway over a road was due in part to the fact that canals in other parts of the world had demonstrated their effectiveness in lowering transportation costs. In addition, New York State had the requisite terrain and water supply for a canal. A team of horses could pull far heavier loads on water than they could over the best of roads.

As shown on the enlarged maps at the entrance, waterways were used for trade from early times. More could be carried in a boat on a stream than by a horse along a narrow Indian trail. As the invaluable fur trade with the Indians moved further west, it was found that New York had an existing water system. The Oswego (Onondaga), Seneca and Mohawk Rivers were used with other streams to boat cargo to the navigable Hudson and on to New York City, where much of it was exported. (Carrying places are indicated between streams.)

Heavy usage led to improvements on the Mohawk and small canals were built at German Flats (Herkimer) and Little Falls by the State-authorized Western Inland Lock Navigation Co. Another canal was built at Rome, enabling boats to pass through to Wood Creek and then, via Oneida Lake, to Three Rivers Point, at which place the Seneca and Oswego Rivers met. Benjamin Wright's 1800 survey of the Mohawk, displayed here, was carried by De Witt Clinton in 1810 when he traced the State's waterways in search of a route for a great canal to Lake Erie. Map number 14 (left) of the Little Falls section of the Mohawk is one of 22 such connecting sections detailing the river on a larger scale.

The large blow-up of a contemporary wood cut represents boating on the Mohawk ca. 1810. Private efforts at canalizing the river went no further than this. The dam through which the men are poling the Schenectady boat is built on a shoal in the river. These dams raised the water level behind them and permitted the narrow boats to slip through. On deeper stretches of the river, when sails were ineffective, the crews would set their poles in the river bottom near the bow on either side of the boat. Pressing their weight against the upper end of the poles they walked the boat upstream until the stern was reached, whereupon they would withdraw the poles, return with them to the bow and start over again. Passenger boats, similarly propelled, were in scheduled use at this time.

The inadequacy of such waterways and contemporary roads to stimulate commerce in such a well-endowed state was pointed out to the United States Congress by New York Representative Peter B. Porter in 1810. Meanwhile, the St. Lawrence River carried freight from the Great Lakes away from New York State to Montreal.

As canals were not a new idea, and were growing in popularity in Europe, a few men in New York State began to see a canal as a possible solution to free trade within the State. Prominent among these were Gouverneur Morris, who early understood the necessity and logic of connecting the Great Lakes with the Hudson River; Jeffery Smith, a legislator from Long Island, who tried to get the State legislature to do something about it; and Jesse Hawley, merchant who worked out a basic plan to connect the State's various east-west rivers with the Hudson, using Lake Erie as the terminus and headway.

The State first became directly involved with the idea of a canal between the Hudson River and Lake Erie in 1808 when it appropriated \$600.00 for a survey of possible routes. By 1816 the route shown on the big state map had been agreed upon. Surveying instruments of the period were crude by today's

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standards, requiring a good deal more diligence on the part of the surveyor-- however, if properly used, they could be quite accurate. An example: To prove that Rome and Syracuse were at the same altitude (which meant that a level canal could be constructed between them with no locks) engineers Benjamin Wright and James Geddes took two widely separate routes between the settlements recording the ups and downs of the different terrains. When Syracuse was reached the difference between their independent calculations was less than $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches! The instrument used by Wright was made in London, England.

The years from 1820-1825 saw a different routing problem solved on the eastern end of the canal and Albany was finally reached. An aqueduct, privately funded, over the Mohawk River at Little Falls, linked that village and its old Western Inland Canal on the north bank, with the Erie on the south. Two other longer aqueducts near the end took the Erie first to the north bank of the Mohawk, then back again where it proceeded south to Albany.

In the West two problems loomed-- one was of a mostly political nature involving the section of a western terminus at Lake Erie; the other was physical. Other than the lamentable miles of muck at Montezuma Swamp, the most difficult engineering problem was stepping the canal over a 90-foot high ridge known as the Niagara Escarpment. Extending to Niagara Falls in the West, the canal met this obstacle at present day Lockport. Five pairs of locks side by side conquered 60 feet while a seven mile long cut through solid rock, 30 feet in depth in one area sliced through the remainder. The towpath here was cut into the rock above the water line but well below the ground surface. The engineer for this project was Nathan Roberts.

The political maneuvering, dire threats and hard work exercised by the citizens of Buffalo and Black Rock over two years in attempting to secure the western terminus for their respective village places presented many inter-city contests in the form of debates. Every possible means was expended by both sides to persuade the Canal Commissioners of each party's superior location.

Although the canal was not complete, both parties knew that the stakes were high. Black Rock is a suburb of Buffalo today.

As sections of the canal were completed, they were opened for business. In 1820 the first tolls were levied on the newly completed middle section comprising 96 miles between Syracuse and Utica. At the close of the season, \$5,244.34 had been collected in tolls. The canal was completed in the fall of 1825. When Governor Clinton (aboard the "Seneca Chief" at Buffalo), felt the urging of the towline on October 26, the tolls received to that date were pushing \$1,000,000. The canal had cost over \$7,000,000; however the debt was projected to be paid by 1836, and it was. Meanwhile the cost to ship a ton of freight from Buffalo to Albany had dropped from \$100 to \$10.

The Seneca Chief and its attendant flotilla stopped at every village of consequence along the route of the canal to indulge in ceremonies prepared by the citizens. When, on November 4th, New York harbor was reached, the City spared no effort or expense to celebrate New York State's brilliant public work.

The canal opened what had been the old frontier; the West. Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Michigan were all prosperously affected by it. In fact, the Erie had to be enlarged to accommodate the traffic. Packet boats carried a flood of immigrants West. These brightly colored boats were the pride of the Erie. Fast packets could carry 50-100 passengers in relative comfort (compared to a stagecoach) across the state from Schenectady to Buffalo in 50 to 70 hours. This was only possible with a frequent change of horses, more horses pulling with utter disregard for the speed limit (4 mph to protect the banks) and priority treatment at all locks. More typical were the line boats like the model "Morning Star" built to carry freight and passengers, which could take 6 days to cover the same distance.

But the bulk of Erie traffic (packets were gone by 1850) was freight vessels. Scows, lakers and bullheads came to predominate but anything that

floated was allowed on the canal. Everything was pulled by horses or mules. Most freighters boarded 4 animals in the bow cabin. Two would rest while two would tow. Passing other boats frequently led to the animals being pulled into the canal. Soon, safety releases were patented and sold to protect the animals. Passing called for one boat to stop its animals and swing wide. If the timing was right, the towrope would sink to the bottom of the canal, allowing the other boat to pass over it. Packet boats sometimes had sickles mounted at the bow stern to cut the other's line if the timing wasn't right.

There were 83 locks on the old Erie, 72 on the Enlarged Erie. The enlarged canal, begun in 1836, was dug 70 feet wide at the water line and 7 feet deep. The channel was straightened in many places where the first Erie Canal, or Clinton's Ditch, wandered around obstacles. The locks which may be seen today along the route of the Enlarged Erie do not look like the originals. Earlier locks looked like those along the lateral canals such as the Black River Canal in Rome. Though later in date than the Erie, these canals were often the same dimensions (40'x28'x4') as Clinton's Ditch. So were the locks--90'x15'. Enlarged Erie locks were doubled by building a new and longer lock alongside the original, then rebuilding the first lock. In this way traffic was not impeded during construction and yet was greatly facilitated after both locks were in operation. The enlargement wasn't completed until 1863. Locks were later lengthened again to accommodate "double headers" or two canal boats linked to each other.

Aqueducts took the canal over a river or stream. They were troughs with a towpath on one side, supported on piers or arches. Cargoes traveling east on the Erie were typically limber, pot and pearl ashes, grain, furs, beef and port, butter, cheese, and whiskey. Westward bound were manufactured items, merchandise, furniture and salt.

Boats were built all along the Erie. The nearest boat yard to the Canal Village in later years was at Durhamville, where the firm of Hosley & Doran

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built canal boats for many years. An interesting feature of boat construction was the 10 foot long stay-belts which run through the wooden sides at close intervals, drawing all timbers fast.

For the trip down the Hudson to New York boats were gathered into tows at Albany. A tow usually consisted of between 50-100 boats lashed together and drawn as a great raft to New York harbor behind a steamer. The day and a half trip down river was a good time for cleaning boats. Boat captains often traveled with their wives or with cooks who could be obtained at agencies catering to the canal trade.

Commission agents arranged for cargoes to be gathered and sold up or down state. For this service the boatman who carried the cargoes paid a fee. The boat captian paid tolls for the use of the canal based on the wieht of his boat and on the .weight of his cargo.. Hydraulic weighlocks at Albany, West Troy, Utica, Syracuse and Rochester determined at the beginning of each season the weight of the empty boat.

An Instector of Boats checked the cargoes and if everything was all right the Collector of Tolls issued a clearance enabling the boat to travel. Collectors were located at Buffalo, Black Rock, Lockport, Albion, Brockport, Rochester, Palmyra, Lyons, Montezuma, Syracuse, Rome, Utica, Little Falls, Fultonville, Schenectady, West Troy, Albany and New York. Proceeding in either direction, the boat would pay its toll to the first collector met, then show a receipt to all other collectors encountered thereafter.

In 1895 9 million dollárs was authorized to deepen and improve the Erie. Many Italian immigrants served as contractors and laborers for this work and the subsequent project, the Barge Canal. This project was stopped in 1900 and in 1903. The people of New York voted \$101,000,000 for the construction of a different canal along the same general route. This canal would be 120 feet across and 12 feet deep, utilizing existing waterways where possible. It would admit only motorized commercial transports such as motorized or

tugboat propelled barges. The increased size of the Barge Canal called for a greatly increased water supply, dredging and damming of rivers, new cuttings in some places and enlarging the Erie in others.

The Village of Delta, north of Rome, became a reservoir for the Barge system in 1912. Though navigation on the old Erie was ended in 1917 by the destruction of the Richmond aqueduct over the Seneca River, the Barge Canal was opened for thru-navigation the following year and horse-drawn boats became a thing of the past.

In 1858 this store was owned by H.M. Farmer, of Lee. He was a postman and a farmer. The building was also used as the office of the Lee Canning Factory at the end of the 19th century. When the factory burned, the office became a general store as it may have been when Mr. Farmer held title. It was donated by the Lee Methodist Church.

The wainscoting was a popular wall and ceiling finish of the last half of the 19th century. The narrow hardwood floorboards are original. A cast-iron stove provides the heat and a kerosene chandelier was used for light.

The sewing machine, ca. 1863, is a Florence, one of the earliest ones, manufactured in Florence, Mass. It sews from right to left, is threaded from the back, and has a shuttle rather than a bobbin. It is still operable.

Our shopkeeper would be aware of the newest fashions and materials, receiving goods from New York by way of the Canal. The shopkeeper would, most likely, also be a seamstress, able to do alterations. Clothes could be made to order or purchased off the rack. A wide selection of fabric and decorations were available. Dresses were of complex construction and would be considered very heavy by today's standards. Silk was a popular material for a dressy dress. Most were made from more than one kind of material. Paper patterns and sewing machines were being used by 1850 and one might come to the store for a piece of material to make-up an item at home. An old dress could be made usable again just by changing the braid or trim. It took about 14 yards of material to make a plain dress. Hats were worn by all when going out of doors. Hats, too, were refurbished. Shoes had buttons which were fastened with button hooks. Fans were used and gloves were worn. White stockings were worn for dress-up and some were color coordinated to go with an outfit.

Corsets and (open leg) drawers were worn. The small waist was most admired and women did their best to be in style. Young girls were introduced to corsets at an early age. The black corset (on table) shows an 18" waist. As the result of the

tight lacing, many women suffered poor health, as corsets rearranged the location of internal organs.

Women wore black while in mourning, a more popular custom in the city than in the country.

Cleaning was a problem, almost every fabric and color involved a different cleaning method. (See notebook in table drawer.)

In this small shop, a woman could find something just for herself or her daughter. She could see what the newest styles were, go home and copy them herself, or she could arrange to have a new outfit made for a special occasion.

Crosby House

There were, in 19th century Wright Settlement northeast of Rome, many houses like this one. Study has revealed little about this building that is not apparent at a glance. Small, practical, utilitarian, it was probably built to replace a settler's log cabin. His wife could boast three bedrooms upstairs and modern stove heat and cooking convenience downstairs.

The Crosby house arrived at Erie Canal Village on a tractor trailer. Its roof had been flattened so it could pass under obstacles along its trip from 9 mile distant Pennystreet Road. Its sills were rotten, the inside had been partially drywalled, the stairs were missing and there was only a remnant of the first floor partition. The building had become a children's clubhouse at its former site. Found were: a stair stringer, an undisturbed doorway threshold, an apparent stairway closet entrance, some original plaster with traces of yellow paint, several layers of old wallpaper under a board, and some stove pipe holes.

Structural observations and a title search strongly hint at the following thumb nail sketch of the building's history. Built as a family dwelling in the 1840's, the house was originally about 6 feet longer at the kitchen end. This now absent space plus 6 feet of the present kitchen comprised a woodshed. The home was at some date annexed on to a larger building and there was a doorway to it where the south kitchen window is now fitted. At this point it probably belonged to Josiah Crosby, a cheesemaker in Wright Settlement. The house has since been used as a blacksmith shop (a large carriage door was cut where the north kitchen window is, and a forge was built against the wall behind the range). It was a chicken coop (and possible cock-fight rendezvous), a tool shed and finally a playhouse when its last owners, the Donald Austins, donated it.

The Crosby house has seen much of life-- and of course, if it could talk... well, it probably wouldn't mention anything about a rug loom. But it is quite possible that a small village house might have sheltered such a loom in its

parlor, or upstairs. Our loom is over 100 years old and was used to make rug carpets. It has 2 harnesses, which means you are using 2 sets of threads. This limits the amount of design you can make on this loom; some looms have as many as twelve harnesses.

The warp is measured on the warp beam, which is sectional. The threads are then brought up over the back beam, and threaded through the heddles, through the reed, and then tied on to the front beam. The tension is adjusted by the knotting. The weft or filler is wound on to the bobbin or shuttle and passed through the shed, changing the harness after each pass. The filler for rag carpet is cut from rags to about $\frac{1}{2}$ " widths. This can be any material available.

The kitchen is well equipped with a cookstove which has a reservoir for hot water on the side, a pump which pumps water from a cistern in the cellar, a washing machine, churn and assorted cookware. The iron on the stove held charcoal, which was used to heat it. The big oval copper container was used to boil clothes clean which were then hung on the line to dry. The woodbox had to be kept full even in the summer if a family was to have hot meals.

An unusual feature of this house, probably an addition, is the outhouse attached to the parlor. While outhouses often came attached to the house, the woodshed or the back porch were more likely locations.

Settler's House

The Petrie house is the oldest building in Erie Canal Village. It was moved here in 1978 from the old Wright Settlement area of Penny'street Road. Another section of the farmhouse now serves as the Tavern's woodshed.

The layout of these early homes is usually the same. Two large fireplaces were built back to back in the central chimney. One was used for cooking and heating the kitchen, the other heated the parlor. Just inside the front door were three doors leading left, right and straight. There might have been a room or a small alcove for a bed off the kitchen or parlor. This area usually was against the back wall of the house, with an adjoining kitchen workroom. Sometimes called a buttery, sometimes a milkroom, this room often had a small fireplace of its own or a bakeoven. Earlier Cape Cods had their bake ovens to one side of the kitchen fireplace or at one side of its reflecting wall.

The Settler's house at Erie Canal Village represents an early farmhouse which has been absorbed by a village sprouted on the banks of the Erie Canal. The Canal, on its way west from Rome, met many such homes. When this happened and farm lands were divided, a bridge was built providing access to the farmer. In this instance, that bridge would have been just outside the parlor windows, for at the Canal Village there was a slight divergence of Clinton's Ditch, or the original canal, from the path followed by the 1844 Enlarged Erie. The little stream which flows through the center of the Canal Village is all that remains of the original Erie upon which a triumphant De Witt Clinton passed on the "Seneca Chief" in 1825. Our "settler" who built this house in 1815 would have witnessed this event. Later he would have seen his farm road extended all the way to South Rome; the plot around his house would become part of an island when the Enlarged Canal was dug through, bisecting Clinton's Ditch just east and west of here.

This type of house is called a Cape Cod and it was brought to New York by New Englanders who were long familiar with it. They were built in profusion

after the Revolution, usually as a replacement for a log cabin raised from the wilderness. The Cape Cod was easy to build and was a good home for a growing family.

While the parlor might be used for special occasions, the kitchen was the center of most early homes and the farmwife was the center of the kitchen. She cooked, baked, spun, wove, sewed, washed, ironed, prepared foods like cream and butter, processed herbs and dried fruit and preserved meats. The tools were basic and all powered by hand. Their use filled the days of these women. When supper was cleared away and the fire was arranged, the couple often slept here.

This house is essentially a box made by sheathing a rigid frame of 18 hand-hewn timbers carefully fitted together without nails. The sheathing is rough sawn planks nailed vertically all around covered with clapboards. A roof is pitched with small timbers and shingled. Inside walls are lathed and plastered. Space is left in the center for a large brick or stove chimney. A few board partitions, a stairway, plus doors and windows completed the house-- no plumbing, furnace ducts or electricity. Plumbing was an outhouse plus gravity fed water to a pipe in the house, or a well and bucket. Central heating was provided by cordwood in the fireplaces of the central chimney. Electricity, well, there was light from the windows and at night from the fire, or a candle if you stayed up late!

You might have looked out long enough to see the watery light of an approaching boat. And you'd be curious about what the westbound boats had on board. Eastbound vessels had bulk cargoes of lumber and grains. Westbound carries had merchandise from Albany and New York-- new fangled things like cast iron stoves and cookstoves, and a host of household gadgets, plus, the newest farm equipment.

The stoves would quickly supplant central chimneys and the first floor of such homes as had them would gain around 90 square feet. In this house

after later partitions were removed by carpenters, a perfect 8' x 9' hatch of floorboards was found in the center, which lifted out easily to reveal the position of the original chimney.

Our settler may have hailed the captain of a passing boat at dusk to inquire about the news. One night he may have heard, "England's got a new queen-- they say her name's Victoria!"

Jacob I. Shull House

The Jacob I. Shull House, in the Italianate style dating from the 1860's, was moved here in 1981 from its original site at Indian Castle (Little Falls) in the Town of Danube, Herkimer County. It had been vandalized and was in need of much repair when acquired for one dollar from its last owner, Ralph Wagner of Spring, Texas.

This mid-Victorian house is of braced post and beam construction with a limestone ashlar (hewn or square stone) foundation. It was dismantled and the parts were numbered for reassembling at the Village. The conclusion that the house, including the wing, was built in the 1860's rests on analysis of the house itself and of a few facts uncovered by research. The usual sources-- deeds, wills, obituaries, county histories, directories, maps and talks with many neighbors--yielded little information.

It is known that in 1856 Jacob I. Shull received a loan of \$8,000, then a large sum, from his father, whose name was also Jacob. In the same year Jacob I. was deeded the land on which the house was to be built for \$4,000. Jacob I. Shull was 30 years of age at the time, a cattle broker, according to the 1869 Herkimer County Directory. The 1868 county atlas showed him as owner of a 100-acre tract, on which the Shull House was located. The place was designated as Indian Castle, the name given to a small fork in the South Mohawk Turnpike, just below the Shull House, in memory of a principle Mohawk village.

Jacob I. Shull was the son of Jacob and Anna Klock Sholl. His grandfather Johan Jost Schol (note the variations of the surname) emigrated from the German Palatinate in 1768 and nine years later fought in the Battle of Oriskany against the British as a member of the Second Battalion commanded by Col. Jacob G. Klock. Jacob I.'s mother was Col. Klock's granddaughter.

Jacob I. married twice. His first wife, Lany Wagner, died in 1875. His

second wife, Maria, last name unrecorded, may have been a sister of Lany. When he died in 1890 at 63, his obituary in the Little Falls weekly newspaper stated that he was "well and favorably known".

Jacob I's will resulted in many changes in his house. A codicil added in the year of his death directed his sons, William and Grant, to provide his wife Maria with food, fuel, clothing and medical attention, and gave her two choices for lodging. One choice was exclusive use of the bedroom and clothes press adjoining the dining room and the free right to use in common all other parts of the building. The other arrangement, which she preferred, was, in the words of the codicil, "... the free right to use and the free use of, for her exclusive enjoyment, the easterly half of the main building including cellar, and the right to use and free use of the main hall of said dwelling house in common with other inmates of the same."

"And I also ordain," the will continues, "that my sons shall at their own expense make such proper and necessary changes in the said house, in making rear approachways, cellarways, doors, partitions, and proper and necessary repairs in the said easterly half of the main building, in case my wife shall at any time elect to occupy the same." The responsibility for remodeling apparently fell to Grant Shull, as William quitclaimed the house to his brother the same year for \$275.

Alterations noted while the house was being dismantled for transportation to the Village included: a partition running across the parlor, which Shull had referred to as "the easterly half of the main building", dividing it into a large and a small room; retrofitting the larger of these rooms with wainscoting; new floorboards; dropped ceiling; sink and stove locations (units not found by the dismantlers); rear door to the outside, and a door (walled off) to the room behind the central stairway which formerly had been reached through the living room. A cellar stair opening into this room may have been added for Maria's convenience.

In evident compliance with her husband's wishes, Maria was provided with a kitchen-utility room, a sitting room off the front hall, a rear approachway and a cellar access from her bedroom. Two additions off the rear approachway, not moved to the Village, were a lean-to room and an outhouse.

It appears that the main building and wing were constructed at the same time. Construction of the wing, outside and in, is very similar to that of the main house. Cut nails are used throughout, with the exception of remodeled areas of the porch roof, where a mixture of cut and round nails was found.

The door locks in the wing, with one exception, were patented in 1884 or 1885, while main house locks were of 1866 patent, as was one lock in the wing. However, the later dated locks could have been added at the time of joint occupancy.

Gas pipes led from the cellar under the living room to the second floor joist, where they were distributed throughout the house except the parlor. It is possible that home-generated gas lighting was installed when the house was built. Such equipment was available as early as the 1850's.

Evidence of the house's former residents was found scrawled on the wall of the upstairs southeast corner room, under peeling wallpaper: "Mrs. Grant Shull", "Ella", "Willie", "Danube Indian Castle" and "May 26, 1889".

MAYNARD METHODIST CHURCH

The Methodist Meeting House was built in 1839 in Maynard, NY. Maynard is a little hamlet in the southeast corner of Marcy, NY.

Jacob Edic, an early member of the congregation, donated the land upon which the foundation was laid. He was engaged in boating on the Mohawk River.

Contributions for the building fund ranged from \$.50 to \$150.00. The goal was \$925.00; this sum paid for all the carpentry work, except the foundation. The congregation also received contributions from its brethren in Utica, \$259.43.

The first recorded meeting in the new church was January 15, 1840, at which time the pews were "auctioned off" to members of the congregation. This old practice assured the church-goer's family of the same pew, service after service, for one year. Some pews were reserved for the general public free of charge. \$91 was raised through the sale.

Sufficient funds had then been raised for the meetinghouse; and to build adjacent horsesheds, lay out a burying ground, put up a fence, and build a parsonage.

The plots in the burying ground were offered for sale. The minimum price was set at \$5.00 a plot. No one living outside certain stated limits was allowed to purchase a plot without special order from the trustees.

In the early years only heads of families were listed as members and so in 1839 records list 27 men as Charter Members.

Church services played an important role in the lives of people of the early 19th century. Prayer meetings and choir rehearsals in the evenings made for a social occasion.

Maynard had the privilege of having a pastor occupy the parsonage until 1882. Some 50 pastors served this little church, some staying only a few months. In 1958, a resident minister was again appointed to the church.

When the community had outgrown this church and decided to build a new one on the same site, it generously donated the meetinghouse to the village.

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Ministers from surrounding churches preside for Sunday Morning Services, weddings, and Christenings, etc.

We are fortunate enough to still have some of the original window panes.

The organ is a parlor pump organ and it is still used for services and at Christmas, however it is not original to the building.

The Baptismal Font was donated and neither it nor the Communion Service are original to the building.

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WOOD CREEK SCHOOL

Wood Creek School was built in 1856 according to old records. It was used as a school until 1953 and in its last years was part of the Vernon-Verona-Sherrill school system. Since it was not far from the canal, boat families tied up for the winter in order to send their children here.

For those not familiar with one-room schoolhouses, grades one through eight were in the same room and taught by just one teacher. While the teacher was working with one class in the front of the room, or sitting on the recitation bench with another group, the other students would be working at their desks. The older children helped the younger ones and the little ones learned from hearing the older children perform oral recitations.

Lunch boxes were recycled lard pails and tobacco boxes. In the days before waxed paper and plastic bags, food was wrapped in a cloth napkin; bread and butter, an egg, and maybe a cookie. There was water to drink; the water bucket and dipper are on a shelf in the hall.

The required studies in a school like this were reading, spelling, writing, arithmetic, geography, and grammar. Algebra, Latin and French were taught in an occasional school; but only if the teacher was competent in these areas. In order to continue their education, students had to travel great distances or board in a town where there was a high school.

Schools were financed through tax monies or tuition, and the length of the school year depended on available monies. When there was a summer session the youngest children usually attended, but the older children were needed for farm chores.

Bells were used to call the children from play and the desk bell was used to attract their attention in the classroom. Recess or playtime was much needed in this era because of the crowded classrooms--there was little space to move around and being outside was a welcome change. There was little play equipment, maybe a ball

or jump rope, but tag and running games were the popular things to do. Children were collectors then too, and the shelf fungi and horse chestnuts may have turned into a science lesson. Our outdoor chain pump provided water for the school bucket.

Our desks are different sizes because the children were different sizes. Some of them are double, which means that you share both seat and desk (note that on some there is a dividing line).

The teacher's desk is cherry with a slant-top writing surface. The box stove with its long stovepipe kept the children warm in winter. Families were asked to contribute to the wood supply. Potatoes could be cooked in the coals for lunch.

A wooden blackboard was found under the slate one when the building was moved. It was blackened with white of egg and charred potatoes. Small slates were used, as paper was very expensive and used sparingly. Dip pens with wood handles and metal nibs were used with the inkwells in the desks. A great deal of effort was spent on penmanship.

Our maps were used in teaching geography. The United States map of 1856, clearly shows the development of the country at the time this school was built.

Singing, elocution, and spelling bees were also part of the school day. If the day was too dark to write or read (there were no lights), these other activities could save the day.

Reading was taught using McGuffey readers, among other things. The first ones were published in 1836 and they were used by many generations of children. Books were not always furnished and family owned books would be handed down from one child to the next. They had few pictures and what they had were black and white. Our library may well have served the parents as well as the children in the days before a village library was available.

This school was donated by Mrs. Gertrude Keller of Verona; coming to the Village on a flat-bed trailer.

We are very fortunate to have received authentic materials; many of the furnishings were donated by retired teachers in this area. Taken as a whole, the interior of this schoolhouse and its contents are truly representative of the 1880's. The painting of George Washington, on the back wall, is the only original piece that still remains in the school.

Harden Museum

Clarence Harden donated most of the horse-drawn vehicles in this barn. In addition, he donated a large collection of rural Americana which is absorbed by the Village as it grows. Mr. Harden has personally driven over half of the vehicles in this barn. He has performed Hollywood stunts, run logging camps, built factories and provided winter taxi service for ladies of the Eastern Star-- all with his horses.

Today, we talk of the look of a car and the way it performs. In the nineteenth century there was the carriage and the horse or team. They were separate investments, with animals frequently costing more than the vehicles. The way the two worked together was up to the driver. With the reins in the hands of a competent man, even common carriages gladdened the eye. However, accidents happened then too. Runaway horses were the most frequent cause. Horses could be spooked by a railroad train, a falling leaf or, on occasion, nothing at all.

All of the vehicles in the Harden Museum were commonplace in upstate New York. With the exception of the Landalet, all are typically rural. Mr. Harden's daughter and granddaughter were driven from their wedding ceremonies in the Landalet. The first floor contains thirteen restored vehicles. Unrestored vehicles and farm equipment are displayed on the second floor.

Four types of roads are shown beneath the carriages. Dirt roads, by far the most common, were usually impassible during prolonged rains. Various methods were used to improve them. If a road had to pass through a marsh, it would be paved with tree trunks laid across the path. These were called corduroy roads. They were described by Charles Dickens in 1842: "The very slightest of jolts with which the ponderous carriage fell from log to log seemed to have dislocated all the bones in the human body."

Believed to have originated in Canada, plank roads were being built in this country just prior to 1850. Yet by 1860 many of them were gone. Because

they were expensive and did not wear well, these wooden roads were not rebuilt. However, their speed of construction and smooth surface created a fad which was widely indulged in throughout the northeast. The broken edges of the road enabled down wheels to be pulled back up on the road again. One vehicle wide, the roads led into the towns that financed them; outgoing vehicles traveled the dirt roads alongside.

The cobblestone street solved the mud problem for many cities. Bricks and uniform cobbles came into frequent use. Many of these streets lie just under today's blacktop. Iron horseshoes and wheel rims clattering over them made quite a different sound.

The macadam road was the best type of road made in the 19th century. Their crowned surfaces were formed of crushed stone of a uniform size. One is not exhibited in the Harden Museum because they were scarce. A notable exception was the Mohawk Turnpike built about 1800.

The barn that contains the Harden collection was built in Westmoreland by the Walker family. Sawn timbers were freighted by the Erie Canal from Tonawanda, New York. By 1973, the barn had been abandoned and was being stripped of its siding--the boards were sold for interior paneling. The frame was bought by Erie Canal Village for a dollar. It was disassembled and brought to the Village in 1974. The frame was erected and covered with siding from other barns around Oneida County.

BLACKSMITH SHOP

Our blacksmith shop was built in 1860 by a Swiss immigrant by the name of Matti.

It was originally located on the corner of Dix Road and Lawrence St., in the little town of Dix, now part of Westmoreland, NY.

A blacksmith was primarily a worker of iron. Rural blacksmiths kept farm equipment in repair, and made tools for farmers, laborers, and other craftsmen. He also did buggy and carriage work such as iron tires and things necessary for domestic comfort, such as fireplace tools. Some of his work consisted of making horseshoes and shoeing horses.

He is called a blacksmith because he specializes in working with iron. Because he works with iron that is comparatively dull and dark in appearance, he is aptly called a "blacksmith". This term differentiates him from the "whitesmith" or "tinsmith", who work with tin plated iron. Also from smiths who work with "bright metals" such as gold and silver.

The blacksmith heats metal (iron and steel are the most commonly forged) on a forge, with soft coal or charcoal and hammers it into shape on a steel block called an anvil. He may then harden the metal by heating it and then dipping it into a water bath.

Hammer forging is shaping metal by repeated blows with a heavy object. The simplest form is that used by a blacksmith who uses tongs to hold the hot metal against the anvil and pounds it into shape.

A bellows is used to raise the temperature of the forge. A bellows is a closed bag with a nozzle at one end. When the sides of the bellows are pushed together, air is squeezed out through the nozzle. When the sides are pulled apart, air is drawn in through valves on sides.

The blacksmith was a respected and needed craftsman. To see a smithy recreate and recapture a time almost lost will charm and spellbind you. You will be entranced with the sound of his double action bellows, the smell of coal and the rhythmic ring of his hammer as it strikes the hot metal and anvil.

The Rome and Fort Bull Railroad Station came to the village from McConnellsville, NY, about 13 miles west of here. It was donated to the village in 1974.

The station was built c. 1911, the style copied from Italianate or bracketed architecture of the Victorian era.

It was apparently the fourth station on the Rome, Watertown, and Ogdensburg RR. Erie Canal Village also has the first station on this same railroad, it being Bennett's Tavern, which served as station, with food and drink, until the railroad built its own.

The station has its original structure and woodwork, such as oiled flooring. The wainscoting on walls and ceiling is original to the building. The wainscoting was done not for decorative purposes, but because plaster would crack from the heavy train traffic.

The waiting room bench, like in many stations, was wall mounted without legs so the floor could be easily swept. The bench is also original to the building. Arms were added to the benches to discourage drifters from sleeping on the bench and inconveniencing the passengers.

An 1864 map shows the location of Rome and McConnellsville as well as the railroads throughout the state of New York.

The pot-belly stove is a typical railroad type. The "pigeon-holes" were used for filing schedules and RR forms. On the wall, different types of RR papers, some dating back to the 1890's.

The watertown and Rome Railroad was completed in Watertown in 1851. In 1861 the line became the Rome, Watertown, & Ogdensburg RR.

When the RW&O was leased to the New York Central RR in 1891, it operated 643 miles of track in upper NY state. The two-tone green exterior color of our station is in accordance with NY Central RR practice.

The man operating the station was an employee of the RR. He was called an "agent" if his station was small; a "superintendent" if his station was large. His duties were many, including selling tickets, being a good bookkeeper, a faithful switch tender, and sometimes telegraph operator.

(For more info. refer to RR
book in drawer)

every day. This helped to minimize spoilage, however, ice boxes were in use by the 1850's and helped to preserve fresh meats, poultry and dairy products. Stores provided only basics. Fresh vegetables that kept in the cellar and dried apples and pears. Eventually, home canning became widespread.

Four bedrooms were available for guests. The front room over the bar was the best, with a stove and four windows. The other three went from small to tiny. The biggest room was for the innkeeper and his wife. It served as their bedroom and living quarters when not tending to the needs of guests. As a consequence, it was probably quite well furnished. All second floor rooms are sound-insulated from the lower levels by a false floor between the first floor ceiling and the second floor floorboards which is covered with a layer of plaster.

By the time Bennett's Tavern was built, many longstanding traditions associated with country inns were disappearing. Guests were not often asked to sleep severally in a single bed. The inn was considered full when all available beds were occupied, not all the floor space as well. Extra beds of a simple sort might have been placed in the ballroom. These could be easily stored when the ballroom was to be used.

One bedroom might get the name of "sample room" if it was used by various drummers coming and going throughout the season to display and sell their wares. These goods could be anything from accordians and musical instruments, to axes and other tools for carpenters.

The ballroom was a frequent fixture of old inns. Music could not be made in any other way except by hand, so when a bunch of gents sat around making it, many came to hear it.

It is not known how extensively the ballroom was used-- it was apparently never decorated. When an auction was held in the 1960's as many as 300 chairs were for sale. Two of those were gilded "fancy chairs" often found in a ballroom of this period.

Bennett's Tavern

When the Watertown and Rome Railroad was well advanced and completion seemed assured, Alanson Bennett, a prominent Roman, had a tavern built on its route through McConnellsville. From the 1850's through the 1870's the tavern must have played an important role in the comings and goings of those in McConnellsville and surrounding localities. But much must be left to speculation as no record was found of the tavern's activities during these years.

Bennett's Tavern crops up on early maps and deeds. Some older residents of McConnellsville recall hearing stories of stage coaches driving up to the hotel, and a torn slip of paper was found from a butcher to a Mr. Fox at the tavern. The building was sold to George Gibbons in 1883 and it was used as the Gibbons home from that time.

The tavern must have been a natural meeting place for travelers coming and going by stagecoach and rail. Several trains stopped in McConnellsville on their way to Cape Vincent and the North Country. Rails were eventually opened to the Thousand Islands. Bennett's was one of three inns in McConnellsville. The tavern must have been very busy for the floors are well worn. The kitchen floor is new, but it's the third one it's had. The side door to the barroom is on its fifth latch.

The tavern was the place to learn news of all kinds. Here were the bagmen or drummers-- traveling salesmen of the time with their wares in a suitcase laid out in the "sample room" upstairs. Out front, a long porch, parallel to the tracks 20 feet away, provided front row seats to one of the Village's greatest spectacles--the arrival of the train.

The tavern was laid out with three public rooms on the first floor: barroom, dining room and parlor. Men met in the bar while their horses were tied outside or stabled if the stay would be overnight. "Fine accommodations for man and beast" read many a tavern sign. In the bar the men chewed, smoked or sniffed tobacco, drank rum, gin, brandy, madiera, local whiskey or hard cider. .

Bennett's Tavern served meals at appointed hours in the ordinary or dining room. In this long room tables and benches probably accommodated more people than was comfortable on occasion and the meals served were probably from a set menu at a fixed price. Meals were heavy and served punctually. There were a variety of things to be consumed at breakfast as well as dinner. The food would usually be quite good, if not haute cuisine; and if accounts of European travelers applied here, it was eaten quickly and noisily.

The parlor, in contrast to the bar and dining room, was a quiet place, often deserted, filled with comfortable furniture and reading material. It was used by the women and by those persons staying at the tavern. The stove was located by the burned spots on the floor boards. The piano was a frequent feature of a tavern's parlor; the room also held a pier mirror which rose to near ceiling height behind where the late American Empire period sofa rests.

The largest room on the first floor is the kitchen. The innkeeper's wife may have cooked the meals; or she may have found help in a single woman who lived in the little room to the right of the fireplace. Additional help may have slept upstairs. Bennett's, built ca. 1850, probably had an iron cookstove which was used in deference to the traditional fireplace. But the brick bake oven and additional cooking capacity afforded by the fireplace crane were undoubtedly used. This kitchen probably had the stove located a little in front of the fireplace. The kitchen table, a sturdy plain affair, was located in the middle of the floor. The kitchen sink is one of two original pieces in the hotel; judging by a pipe hole in the floor, it was always where it is now. The splash board and cast iron sink, however, are not original.

Pantries were for keeping food. All but root vegetables and fruit was kept here. Packaging, such as tin cans, cartons and other disposable containers was not practiced to any extent in the 1850's. Foodstuffs were bought from large containers at a store, sacked or wrapped, and brought to the pantry where they were placed in smaller containers and bins. Shopping was generally done

THE PACKET-BOAT

"CHIEF ENGINEER OF ROME"

You are now gliding along on a 2-mile stretch of one of the most historically important waterways in the U.S. And, you are riding in a replica of a packet-boat, completely rebuilt and christened the "Chief Engineer of Rome", in 1985, named for the first packet-boat to float on the Erie.

The Erie was started here in Rome, NY, July 4, 1817. There is a marker on the bank, as you head west, showing where the first shovelful of earth was turned. The then Gov. DeWitt Clinton was primarily responsible for the canal and it was affectionately nicknamed "Clinton's Ditch".

The canal was finished in Oct. 1825, and Governor Clinton traveled from Lake Erie to New York City for the greatest celebration in the state's history. Cannon boomed all along the canal to let the people know from one end to the other that the Erie Canal was complete.

Early on, the operation of the canal brought a sharp reduction in freight shipping charges. From \$100 to \$10 a ton. The packet-boat afforded a more comfortable ride as compared to a jolting stagecoach. The Canal opened the West to trade and immigration, goods and raw materials could flow more easily both eastward and westward--and a prosperous financial operation allowed the seven (7) million dollar canal debt to be paid in full by 1836.

A team of horses could move 500 tons along a waterway like the Erie; on land it took 6 to 8 horses to move only 6 tons. The bulk of Erie traffic was freight vessels, such as scows, lakers, and bullheads (a covered boat that carried cargo needing protection like flour or grain). They were all pulled by horses or mules, as were the packet-boats.

They were called "packet" after ocean-going ships that carried only passengers and mail. Canal boats charged an average of 5¢ a mile with meals and bed, less if they chose to bring their own food and sleep on deck. Horses worked 6 hours on and

6 hours off; extra horses or mules were carried in the bow of the boat, as frequent changes were necessary. The speed limit on the canal was 4 mph and was strictly enforced to save wear and tear on the banks; but express packet boats often exceeded that limit, the captains willing to pay fines in order to make good time. The packet boat had the right-of-way over other traffic. As the towpath was only on one side of the canal, passing another boat called for one boat to stop its team and swing wide. If the timing was right, the tow rope would sink to the bottom and the second boat could pass over it. Some boats carried sickles on the bow to cut the other boats tow rope if the maneuver was not made correctly, and to lessen the possibility of having the animals pulled into the canal.

Some bridges over the canals were low enough to sweep passengers or anything else off the deck as the boat passed underneath. Fresh produce and other things were sold to passengers from the bridges along the way.

In 1836, the state began to widen, deepen and straighten the canal to 70 feet wide, 7 feet deep, and with 11 less locks; it then became known as the Enlarged Erie. You are now riding on a section of the straightened canal. There were no locks on this section because it was a level stretch where no locks were needed. The original canal, "Clinton's Ditch", runs through the village near the schoolhouse.

Between 1900-1903, New York State voted for the construction of a different canal along the same general route; this was to be called the Barge Canal. Delta Dam became the reservoir for the Barge Canal. Navigation on the Erie ended in 1917. The Barge Canal opened the same year, 1917, and is still used today, mostly by pleasure boats.

GORDON BAIRD COLLECTION
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS MUSEUM
OF ONEIDA COUNTY

Gordon Baird was Commissioner of Public Works for Oneida County from 1963 to 1971. He died in 1982.

Mr. Baird was very interested in the history of roads and road building and started collecting outdated road-related items. His collection was added to by the men who worked under him.

The road crews often found bridge plates, road signs and other out-dated pieces as they were building new roads and would save them for Mr. Baird. This collection was housed for some years at the Oneida County Public Works Building in Oriskany, NY.

In order to make it more accessible to the public, it was decided to loan the collection to the Erie Canal Village. The men who worked for the Department of Public Works built the building with county materials.

The electric train was donated to the village by the Ogdensburg Library. The train and its layout belonged to a Mr. Worden Phillips. After his death, his widow donated it to the Public Library in Ogdensburg, NY. The Kiwanis Club maintained and ran the train for sometime.

Five years ago the train was donated to the Erie Canal Village. It has been modified to show the Rome, Watertown, & Ogdensburg Railroad and the buildings show depict some of the buildings we have here in the village. The miniature railroad blends in with some of the railroad signs of the Baird Collection.

THIS EXHIBIT CAN BE FOUND IN THE GORDON BAIRD TRANSPORTATION CENTER