

DETERMINATION AND FAITH

Submitted by Village of Richfield Springs
Historian Harriett Geywits

It was over two hundred years ago, one mile north of the Village of Richfield Springs, when this project was started by some of the most prominent citizens from miles around.

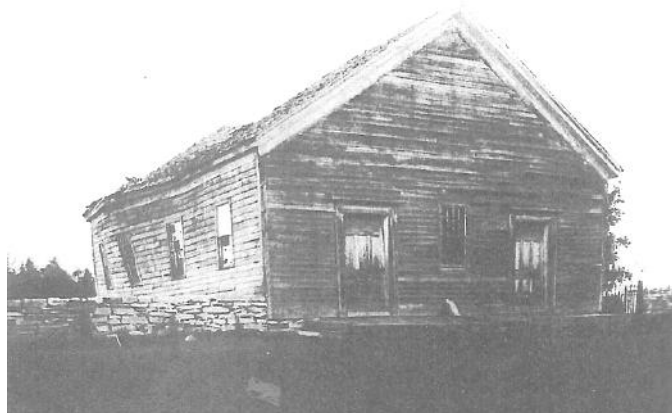
Land was purchased from Samuel Bloomfield who is said to have procured the area from the Indians, but there were no records of the purchase. His father, Johnathan, better known as Deacon Bloomfield, was one of the first settlers coming to this section from New Jersey in 1790. Samuel's brother, Jarvis, was the leader in the construction of the building. What building? It was the Warren Meeting House, the first church in the Town of Warren and was soon completed with the determination and faith of the pioneers who settled here. There were only two other churches at that time north of the Mohawk River.

The lumber for building was sawed at Deacon Bloomfield's mill and volunteer laborers came to help for 150 days at \$1.15 per day. For those who needed room and board, the cost was \$1.75 per week. Those who gave their time were credited with \$1.00 per

day. Other subscriptions consisted of wheat at \$1.00 per bushel; rye at 75 cents per bushel; maple sugar at a shilling a pound; gammon (smoked ham) at the same price; swarms of bees; and pork at \$20.00 per barrel. Those who were teamsters were credited with \$1.25 per day. Most of the subscriptions were paid in pork as there was a packing house at Pages' Corners (Cullen) where pork was prepared and sent to Albany by ox-cart. Most of the money for building was secured by barter.

The first service at this new Methodist Church was performed before the building was even completed. It was a funeral for the child of William Mack, held on May 1, 1814.

When completed, the building was also used for various services other than spiritual ones. During the Civil War, the women met at the church to scrape lint. What we would consider an annoyance when there is lint on our clothing, the industrious ladies of that day knew that if they gathered this lint, it could be used as an essential part of medical care for those in the war. It was a



soft substance that could be used under a bandage as absorption. Wet, it could be used as a sponge. Not only was the lint obtained by combing old clothing, but also from fine linen cloth which was cut into three by five squares called charpies. While this might have seemed a boing or useless project for some, it provided a necessary way for women to contribute to the war effort. They also made bandages and knitted socks for the troops, perhaps finding comfort in their surroundings while they worked.

Death was an expected part of life. The boards which made up the coffins were sawed in Bloomfield's mill and were mostly cherry and walnut. Prior to 1815, headstones were made of pine boards on which calf's heads (symbol of death) were painted with

the name and age of the deceased. In later years, the use of limestone slabs for headstones was substituted.

Methodism was to grow in the area. By 1845, there were churches in Little Lakes and Brighton as well as the Warren Church where services were held every two weeks until 1872 when a new Methodist Church (now Trinity Christian Reform Church) in the village of Richfield was built. The old church was still used occasionally for funerals, entertainments and other meetings but the property began to run down and, instead of keeping up the necessary repairs, the old landmark was allowed to decay.

A portion of an article

that appeared in the Utica Tribune in 1910 depicts the neglect of the building and sadness of its loss. "One who treasures the memory of valiant deeds of our forefathers and eagerly inspects the various landmarks which remain to attest to their heroism, cannot but be saddened when he views the ruins of a former great and good enterprise. It is important not only for the years of pioneer hardship endured by those who were its founders, but because of the mute congregation which once worshiped within its walls and who now rest beneath its shadow. The old Warren Meeting House, its weather-beaten form after so many year still stands. Its bolted doors shut out the inquisitive. The ceiling and joists have fallen from their high estate. The seats remain as they were when last occupied by worshipers, but the only sound where once the whitewashed walls echoed to Amen and Halleluiah, is the twitter

of feathered songsters who seek its shelter to rear their young. When the Methodist Church was built in Richfield Springs, the Warren Church gradually went into disuse and finally was closed." The building was torn down in 1910.

Another example of 'gone but not forgotten', this and other churches of the area that seem to no longer serve the present population, once served the pioneers who believed in the betterment of the world and followed their faith. Perhaps some of these pioneers who now rest from their labors in the Bloomfield Cemetery are proudly in your family trees: Abbott, Barker, Brown, Bullion, Bloomfield, Bronner, Cleland, Crim, DeLong, Fowler, Fox, Gardner, Goddard, Harwick, Heustis, Hudson, Laine, Lane, Lewis, Mack, Palmer, Preston, Schooley, Starr, Stoel, Sweet, Tilden, Weatherby, Wilbur and Winne. Hopefully they will not be forgotten.

Anglers Sought For Bass Tournament

The Richfield Springs Community Center's Annual Bass Tournament is scheduled for Saturday, July 16, rain or shine, at the Canadarago Lake Boat Launch, on 135 Dennison Road, just off US Route 28, Richfield Springs.

Registration is from 5:30 a.m. to 7:00 a.m. Fishing will be from 7 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Weigh in is at 1:30 p.m. A free lunch will follow weigh in. Fee is \$20 per person, \$10 per person for 12 and under. For tournament information either call Bill Kosina, Tournament Coordinator, at 315-749-3286 or e-mail bill@richfieldzone.org

Cash prizes this year total \$1000 plus 25% of registration fees and will go to the top three boats (total bag weight) and heaviest lunger. There is a limit of three bass per boat.

Cash prize sponsors are: Andela Products/Ruby Lake Glass, G-Tech Marine, Ed Bello Electric and Excavating, James Jordan Associates, Architects and JC Bait and Tackle (in memory of Laura Duncan-Bachanas). There will be a 50/50 raffle, a beer basket raffle and door prizes of fishing related items.

This event is in cooperation with the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation-Central Region and paid for in part by a grant from Otsego County Government.

For information regarding the Richfield Springs Community Center call 315-858-3200 or visit us at www.richfieldspringscommunitycenter.org

Concerts In the Park Scheduled

"Concerts In The Park" series, a long-time tradition, will continue in Richfield Springs this summer. The concerts will be held at 7 p.m. Wednesdays in Spring Park on U.S. Route 20.

The concerts are free and are sponsored by the Richfield Springs Area Chamber of Commerce and partners with the Village of Richfield Springs, Otsego County Community Events Program and the Community Foundation South Central New York.

Those who attend should bring a lawn chair or blanket and perhaps your dancing shoes to enjoy the evening and the music!

The schedule is as follows:

June 29: Glimmerglass Festival: A season preview presented by the Young Artists.

July 6: Dirt Road Express: A showcase of classics, country, classics plus 50's and 60's

July 13: Helen's Dixielanders: Featuring a variety of music from polka, show tunes & opera to Dixieland.

July 20: The Oldies Show Band: Bringing back wonderful memories from the 50's, 60's & 70's.

July 27: The Nelson Brothers: Featuring classic country.

August 3: New Horizons Barbershop Chorus & Individual Quartets: Singing a capella in the barbershop style.

August 10: Double Chase-Matt & Thelma: Performing some old, some new and some classics.

August 17: Cincinnati Creek: Featuring Blue Grass

August 24: Rylee Lum Band: Keepin' It Country

August 31: Salt City Brass: Featuring a variety of music.