

# COUNTRY COUSINS CALLING

BY BEATRICE SHAW

Editor's Note: Had there been a local newspaper and a columnist such as Bea Shaw back in the early days of Old Northfield Township, the following "items" from the area might have appeared in her column.

**A LONG HORSE AND BUGGY RIDE** — Elihu Griswold will soon return to his 164 acres on Lot 7, in Macedonia. Last year he cleared 10 acres of land, and in the fall he planted it to wheat. He has built a nice log cabin on his place. Recently he borrowed a horse and buggy from Col. Arthur in Northfield Center, and drove to his former home in New York, to marry Betsy Potter. They will be back in time for him to harvest his wheat crop. (This would have been a news item in 1832).

**A NEW NAME FOR ISAAC BACON NEIGHBORHOOD** — We hear that a pedlar, passing through the Isaac Bacon district, was unable to sell a single item. He remarked that the people were so stingy they would snatch a penny from a dead man's eye. It is reported that some people have begun to call the neighborhood "Snatchpenny". (Early 1800's).

**TOTAL ABSTAINERS** will be sad to know that the source of the name of their thriving village, Brandywine, is New England rum, which was called brandy-wine, by the Dutch of New York. (Early 1800's).

**A NEW RECIPE BOOK** — "Brown's Excelsior Recipe Book" is just off the press, and will be sent anywhere for 30c. It contains over 500 excellent recipes, and other valuable information, such as Contents of Cisterns, how to measure grain, fencing, papering, and how to find the number of perches in a wall. (Webster's definition of "perches": A measure of length equal to a rod; in measuring masonry, usually 24 $\frac{3}{4}$  cubic feet. Date of item, 1878).

**FINE FURNITURE FOR SALE** — Mr. Amzi Chapin announces that he is prepared to make fine furniture to order in walnut, cherry, or maple. If you wish to see a sample of his work you may call at his house, where he has recently finished a square candle stand; a cherry Governor Winthrop desk, with key insets of ivory and a hidden drawer for valuable papers, and a schoolteachers desk in cherry wood. Mr. Chapin also makes coffins, to order. He will accept in payment for his work, any farm product, such as pickled pork, or beef, bacon, butter, or potatoes. He will accept whiskey at the current rate of 18 cents per quart. Customers may also pay for their furniture in labor, such as hoeing corn, mowing meadows or spinning. (Early 1800's).

**FENCE VIEWERS, ROBERT WALLACE, JERIMIAH CRANMER, AND WILLIAM CRANNEY** complain that many farmers are not keeping their fences in proper repair. Good fences are very essential in these perilous days. Mr. Henry Wood reports that he heard a loud squealing one night recently, and hurried out to find a large bear carrying off one of his pigs. The squealing at a distance in the dark forest soon disclosed it's fate. Wooley-nigs are also reported to be in this neighborhood. They have the appearance of a huge wild-cat, look savage, and are as savage as they look. (Early 1800's.)

**IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT** — Simon Shaw announces that he will include a fine piece of dinner-ware in each sack of flour. Sour apple jelly will be for sale at his cider mill this ("The Gay Nineties").

**CAUSE FOR WRATH** — The citizens of Macedonia are wrought over the announcement that the Pennsylvania Railroad will close public road leading from Bedford to Little York, where it crosses the railroad tracks. Last night they tore down the fence the railroad officials had built to prevent horse and buggy traffic over tracks. ("The Gay Nineties").

**NARROW ESCAPE FROM DEATH** — At a recent baptism at Van Horn's Pond, George and Frank Gooseman almost drowned when the student minister, Mr. Orrin, held the boys' heads under water during all the baptism ceremony. Miss Emily Smith came to the rescue and showed the young minister how to baptize. ("The Gay Nineties").

**"WOMAN'S WORK IS NEVER DONE"** — Although the Pease Leach family have left their Little York farm, and moved to Northfield Center, Mrs. Leach still has to milk her Jersey cow, quartered in Johnny McConnell's barn. (Around 1905.)

**CONSTABLE ABRAHAM CRANMER OBEYS ORDERS** — Abraham Cranmer journeyed to Newburg last week, taking with him Hulda Seeley, who was ordered out of Northfield Township by the Overseers of the Poor. He reports that he left her with the Constable at Newburg. (1819)

**COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE STAGE COACH** — Mr. Alexander Campbell does not seem to appreciate our fine Pioneer Fast Stage Line. He reports that he spent all night between Hudson and Little York. He complains that although he paid full fare, he had to get out of the coach during the night and walk several miles, through mud and swamps. (1836.)

**MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE.** — Mrs. Wm Holbrook reports that her cousin Lena has never had any news about her husband. He was supposed to join her at Mrs. Holbrook's home, where Lena was visiting. When he failed to appear, Lena returned to her home in Cleveland. She found her husband's working clothes on a chair, but no trace of him. He had evidently dressed in his best clothes and started along the tow path of the canal to join her. It is feared he was the victim of two outlaws who have been lurking along the canal, robbing and killing their victims. They then cut open the boats so that they will sink, and throw them into the canal. (In the 1880's)

**GOOD CONDUCTOR MAKES LITTLE BOY HAPPY** — A little boy, riding on the train to Cleveland recently, lost his hat. The conductor carried it off to a nearby field. The little boy sobbed so hard at losing his new hat that the good conductor stopped the train, got out of the field, and brought back the hat to a very happy little boy. (Story related by Aunt May Benson, who is 90 years old.)

**COMPLAINTS ABOUT MACEDONIA MILK** — A Cleveland customer for milk shipped in by the Brooks Creamery Co. sent word that she wanted no more of it. She complained that every morning a thick yellow scum had formed on top of the milk. (Also related by Aunt May Benson.)