

THE YELLOW WASP

Lima Historical Society

February 2024

“Lima’s Early Settlers and Their Industries”

Talk read by Mrs. Ethel Miner Reddick at Lima DAR meeting, Oct. 8, 1914

Copy in Tennie Burton Museum Archives

The following account of Lima’s early history was written by Ethel Miner Reddick (1886-1968) 110 years ago for a presentation to the members of Lima’s *Skahase-ga-o* chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. With the greatest appreciation to Mrs. Miner for the invaluable information imparted in this talk, the Editor of *The Yellow Wasp* has respectfully added a few notes of clarification on several specific points that may either be unclear to today’s readers, or on which additional information has come to light during the past century. In Mrs. Reddick’s written words:

“In the land of the Senecas, there was a village known as *Skahasese-ga-o*. To this village in the Spring of 1788 came two white men, Paul Davidson and Jonathan Gould,¹ who had left their home in Connecticut to seek a permanent home in Genesee country. Their route was Sullivan’s track,² the whole distance from the Susquehanna to where the Indian trail bore off in the direction of Canawaugus.³ At *Skahase-ga-oa*, they halted, erected a cabin, and began clearing the forest. In the fall, they went back to Connecticut, and in the spring of 1789, Paul Davidson returned, bringing with him his wife, two children and mother-in-law. Asahel Burchard accompanied them. The same year, Abner Miles⁴ came, and the following year Dr. John Miner, the first physician. Asahel Burchard brought his family here in the summer of 1790. Ruben Thayer came soon after, and Steven Tinker and Solomon Hovey came in 1791. Thomas Lee, William and Amasa Humphrey, David Morgan, Asahael and Matthew Warner and Miles Bristol soon followed and settled along the Indian trail.⁵



Hetchler House, Genesee Country Village & Museum. Typical of early Euroamerican dwellings in the Genesee Valley

Captain Davidson raised a crop of oats and turnips, the first crop of any kind raised in Lima.⁶ He became a successful farmer and lived there until his death in 1804. Abner Miles, though not a permanent resident, gave his name to the settlement, ‘Miles Gore.’⁷ The first school was established in 1792 by John Sabin. The first public house was opened in 1793 by Ruben Thayer. This inn was situated on the north side of the State road,⁸ just west of the Lehigh Valley Station on land now owned by Sheldon

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¹ Archaeological evidence indicates that *Skahase-ga-o* was inhabited by the Senecas during the mid 1600’s and was long since abandoned by the late 1700’s when Davidson and Gould arrived.

² Reference is to an invasionary expedition led by Revolutionary War General John Sullivan through traditional Iroquois homeland across today’s NYS during 1779-80.

³ *Canawaugus* was located west of present-day Avon NY during this period.

⁴ AKA Abner Mighells purchased a large tract of land in the area. He sold acreage to others mentioned here.

⁵ Other early Lima residents also known to have settled here during this period: Elijah Gifford, William Rice, four Leech brothers, the Sterlings, Pecks, Bensons, etc. (Jenks, 1964 p. 10).

⁶ A variety of crops, particularly the staples—corn, beans and squash—had been raised by the Seneca inhabitants of Lima for many years prior to the 1700’s.

⁷ See fn 4 re: Abner Mighells. Lima settlers changed name to Charleston in 1789 and to Lima in 1808.

⁸ Present day East Main Street -NY/US Route 5 & 20. See photo on p. 2.

Positively Lima Shirts Are Still Available Via Our Website

LHS Calendar of Events

PLEASE CLIP AND SAVE.

- Thurs. Feb. 15, 2024 Membership Drive Committee Meeting by Zoom. 7 pm Contact Elizabeth Osta.
- Thurs. March 14, 2024 LHS Board meeting at Museum and by Zoom 7 pm. All LHS members welcome to attend.
- April: Dates TBD Cleaning Days at Tennie Burton Museum.
- Thurs. April 11, 2024 LHS Board meeting at Museum and by Zoom 7 pm. All LHS members welcome to attend.
- Sun. May 19, 2024 *Exploring Lima History* -A Day of Events and Activities at Lima Town Hall.
- Memorial Day Season Opening of Tennie Burton Museum.
- June TBD LHS Annual Meeting/Elections

LIMA HISTORICAL SOCIETY PO Box 532 LIMA NY 14485 (585-624-1050)

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Thank You!

To our Donors and Renewed Members who responded so generously at the close of 2023. Member support is vital to maintaining Lima's Tennie Burton Museum in a way in which we can all take pride.

We are grateful for the help of the Town and Village of Lima in covering utilities/water, but there are many other costs in caring for the artifacts and written history of our town as well as a nearly 200-year-old museum.

Clearly, many of you also value Lima's museum as a resource for residents and an attraction for visitors.

2024 LHS Membership Drive

It has become clear to us in recent years that we are not immune to the demographic changes affecting so many other museums and historical societies. The need for new, younger, active members is the key to our longterm future as an organization and to that of the museum itself. So we are launching an "All Hands on Deck" Membership Drive this Spring.

Please help us get the word out in the community in whatever way seems most effective to you. Have ideas? Want to help? Contact Elizabeth Osta via our website.



HELP WANTED Photo Scanning Project

The huge number of catalogued historic Lima photos in our collections is impressive but overwhelming, so we are inviting members to join us in an "assembly-line" effort on several days in the spring to help scan photos and enter scans into our electronic database. No experience necessary. Contact us on website if you are interested in helping.

Left: Photo: First "Public House" in Lima - 1793 Reuben Thayer/Wemett house (87.18.068)

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Exploring Lima History

May 19th Lima Town Hall

- Showing of Historic *Positively Lima* video
- Lima History Scavenger Hunt for Families
- Slide Shows - Historic Photos and Architecture
- Old Time Crafts for Kids
- Refreshments

WATCH LHS WEBSITE FOR DETAILS

“Lima’s Early Settlers and Their Industries” (continued from page 1)

Chappell. In the following year, on the opposite side of the road, the first store was opened by Tryon & Adams. The Post office was there and several houses. As corn was the one of the foremost crops, a grist mill was needed, this Zebulon Moses erected in 1794, near Spring Brook. Two years later Ruben Thayer erected a saw mill south of the present village on the land now known as the Day farm. Nearly all the early trade was in ashes.⁹ In 1794, when the first store was established, Mr. Smith, the manager purchased pot and pearl ash from local settlers.

This was carried to Irondequoit Bay, and shipped to Oswego and Montreal. The trade in ashes was a large one, and soon several asheries sprung up around Lima. Many of our older residents remember when the ashcarts were familiar vehicles on our streets. One of the largest asheries was owned by Ira Godfrey and was situated on Rochester St. on the premises now owned by Mr. Skehan. The limekiln situated west of the village did a thriving business. It is said there were seven others near Lima. In 1812, Lima was a busy place in the western part of the State being on the main road over which the soldiers bound for Buffalo passed.¹⁰ Besides this, when the war ceased, and the tide of emigration began to flow westward, it all passed through here. The great wagons and their six horse teams went by one after the other everyday. Public houses sprung up along the line and were favorite resorts for the travelling public.

⁹ Reference here is to potash and related pearl ash which were in high demand internationally for making soap, glass, gunpowder, and for dyeing fabrics and baking. Western New York settlers, clearing acres of forests, had a rich source of fuel. (Koch, 1992) See https://www.crookedlakereview.com/articles/34_66/55oct1992/55koch.html

¹⁰ The War of 1812 brought soldiers and others travelling to the fort at Niagara and returning east after defeat by British forces.

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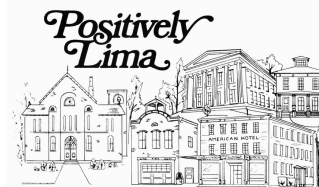
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**Lima Historical Society
 2024 Membership Drive**

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