

An Old Iron Fragment from Palatine History

Let us drift back through the years to the opening of the Canajoharie Village school year in 1943. A war now nearly forgotten by man was raging. A thirteen year old boy with initials W. B. left the small country school at Marshville. His grandfather and mother had attended the same small country school before him. Six years in that school was now past. There were no sisters and the only brother was not to emerge for another five years. The few students in that school were like family. The ones closest to this boy's age, yet stayed in the country school. The Ames school bus went by the boy's home and riding on it brought the long cold winter walk to Marshville School to an end. But, Oh! How different the village school was. Now there were nearly forty fellow students in Canajoharie seventh grade.

Whatever the reason the collecting bug had already bitten the thirteen year old boy. This ailment was and still is considered by many people to be a disease. He took artifacts to school to illustrate the history classes. Acquaintances were often older people whom made history not just studied it.

The village school could not replace his county school upbringing. Once the country schools closed, the transition was not always an easy one. In 1944 or 1945, a village boy and W. B. rode their bicycles to a crumbling but important piece of Mohawk Valley history. The destination was a fort east of Nelliston, New York known as Fort Ehle. They knew it was once a mission to the Mohawk Indians kept by Dominie Ehle. It was an important Mohawk Valley structure. The very early west part of Fort Ehle was falling to ground with it, a hand forged eves trough hanger. Along with its mates, it supported the hand hewn wooden trough, which caught God's rain from the roof. The water had been diverted from the ancient stonewalls for nearly two centuries. On that day, that old piece of historic iron was carried away on a bicycle. Now, nearly seventy years later it is still in the collection of someone who has protected it through the years. It is being returned to a descendant of the Ehle family as a gift. This is where it should be. Its new owners are new friends of an aged boy at least at heart. Who are they? They are Janine Dillenback Nelson, whose mother was borne an Ehle and her husband Bill Nelson.

W. B.

Stone Arabia

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