

A Stone Arabia Relic

Not long after I came to the Nellis Farm at Stone Arabia in August 1948 I first entered the building called the shop. The building was originally an Ice House before the first electric refrigeration came to the farm. Now it was a place to go if something broke and you needed a nut, bolt, nail or screw to do the repair. A vise and anvil were there also in case they were needed. An unusual cupboard was nailed to the north wall. It was 18 ¾ inches high x 30 ¾ inches wide and 8 ¾ inches deep. There were no doors on the cupboard. It was divided into 34 small pigeon holes, one large one and a small drawer. The cupboard was well built of thin boards some of which had been used before. There were once part of an agricultural advertising sign reading "champion mowers and reapers Sold by _____". It was the same type of sign found in the old England blacksmith shop a mile or so to the south. Those in the old cupboard probably came from the blacksmith and wagon shop near the upper corners. The cupboard was painted a green color now faded and alligatored. At the time I first saw the cupboard it held small screws. Parts and other things that deserved a special place so they did not get lost. The question was, just what was the original use of this strong cupboard? The question was answered by my father-in-law Benjamin S. Nellis. He said it was the Stone Arabia Post Office. Little was thought about the Stone Arabia relic at the time. Years later when I took the shop building down to build the new garage I carefully saved the Stone Arabia Post Office. It was stored away for many more years before questions again arose regarding the old Post Offices important job in a time long ago. What path the Post Office took from active service to a Stone Arabia workshop is unknown. It was discovered that the Post Office in Stone Arabia was opened on October 27, 1830 and closed on May 31, 1907. My Father-in-law's mother was a member of the Shults family. A very important and influential family who may have owned the hotel or other building where present Stone Arabia Road crossed State Route 10. In an interview with Manley Shults taken in 1995 he stated that he lived on that corner when he was a boy and until he went to high school. Manley was in his 80's when the interview took place. This puts the Shults family near or in the building when the Post Office was located at the time it was closed. Earl Shults was my father-in-law's uncle. He owned the farm where the Post Office was later found until it was sold to the Nellis Family just prior to the depression. Thus the question of its removal and by whom is nearer answered. We have accurately followed the path of the old Post Office for the sixty years I have known about it and hopefully back to a time when it bulged with mail for the residents of Stone Arabia.

Skip Barshied

Stone Arabia

December 29, 2008