

TURNPIKE TALES

by Jim Ford

"TURNPIKE TALES" #10

(Historical items from the "Madison Bouckville Antique Week" region)

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The Madison-Bouckville area has been rich in history from the arrival of the first settlers to the present day. As an addition to the website, we have decided to share some of that history in order that the patrons who travel to the Madison-Bouckville Show will have a better understanding of our truly unique region.

Bouckville's Buildings Have Had Many Uses – Part 2

In Part 1 of this article, we were walking up the main street of Bouckville, having started from the western end of the community and progressed eastward. Let's continue that walk and begin with the Bouckville Methodist Church.

Ground was broken for the church in 1852 and the church was dedicated in 1853. It certainly has been the home of a lively congregation ever since. In this church is found a bronze tablet dedicated in 1907 to the Bouckville men who took the Oath of Allegiance to become soldiers during the Civil War. They were led by Aaron T. Bliss, who later became the Governor of Michigan. Governor Bliss supplied the funding for the plaque.

The beautiful stained glass windows in the church came from the Congregational Church in Madison. This followed the closure of that church in 1909. One of the windows is in memory of Lt. Seward Mott, son of Samuel R. Mott. Lt. Mott had been killed by a Native American in Arizona Territory while on his first assignment following graduation from West Point. The funeral services for Lt. Mott were held in the Bouckville Church in 1887. As you can see, the church has been a focal point of the community for many decades.

We continue east to the Depot Antiques building. Just as the name implies, this was the railroad depot for the community of Bouckville. The railroad system was the Ontario & Western Railroad Company, often referred to as the "Old and Weary."

The original depot on this site was built in 1870. It served its purpose until 1911 when it burned, possibly from sparks from a passing engine. The present building was dedicated in 1912.

With the passing of the Ontario & Western Railroad in the 1950's, the structure has seen many changes. At one time it was the home of the original Quack's Diner, prior to that diner moving to Madison. In subsequent years it was purchased by Henry and Drew Uhlig, who ran a successful snowmobile sales and sign painting business.

Currently, the building has been converted into an extremely successful multi-dealer antiques shop. Henry is still the owner and you can see him waving cars into his parking lot behind the shop during the Antiques Show. We can still imagine the railroad tracks running right beside the east side of the depot.

Across the roadway from Depot Antiques is the Cider House Antiques Shop. The structure was built in 1947 as a private home on land that was once part of the Mott's Cider Mill complex. If you stand in front of the building, looking just to the east, you can imagine the buildings that Samuel R. Mott constructed in 1882. A processing plant, bottling works, cooperage and railroad siding occupied the site that is now set up each year with tents and vendors for the annual antiques show.

Cider House Antiques, as well as the Cider House Show Field, are owned by Jim Dutcher and are certainly venues that you will not want to miss.

Just to the east of Depot Antiques is the former home of Samuel Rogers Mott. He arrived in Bouckville in 1868, after having made a deal for part ownership in a cider and vinegar firm in 1867. The building was originally McClure's Tavern when the first settlers were moving into the township. It was constructed c.1805. Following its conversion into private housing, many of Bouckville's most prominent families have made it their residence.

While Mr. Mott lived in the former tavern, he operated the cider mill across the canal from the present Bouckville Mill feed store, in the old distillery building. The cobblestone distillery had been converted into a cider firm c.1867. In 1882, a new mill complex was built next to railroad tracks across the roadway from his home. In 1885 the Peet Brothers sold their mill, also on the canal, to Samuel Mott. He and his family now had the entire cider complex along the canal and the new complex next to the railroad. The company had certainly grown.

Taking a look at the McClure's Tavern building today, you can certainly see that it has always been considered a very imposing structure in our area.

Next on our walk is the Gallery Antiques Co-op. The building was constructed in 1924 for Otto Fischer and was the home of Fischer's Garage. With the construction of the garage on the busy Cherry Valley Turnpike (today's Rt. 20), Mr. Fischer was assured of a very successful career. He became known not only as a master mechanic, but a person who could repair items of all sorts.

When you are inside the antiques shop you can see the different areas that made it an auto and truck garage. That point is quite fitting because the current owners, John and Theresa Mancino are car enthusiasts and feature some outstanding automobile memorabilia.

Continuing east we come to a lovely brick home built in the early 1800's. Today it is the home of the Mancino family and was formerly known as the Washburn home. In the early and mid-1900's the Washburns were a very prominent family and there were three Washburn homes. One was the brick house, another is now called Stone Lodge Antiques and the third was on the point of Rt. 20 and Indian Opening Rd. We will mention each of these.

The brick home was constructed of locally made materials. The brick yard was located just to the north of Bouckville along what was to be the Chenango Canal route. Traces of bricks can still be seen when spring plowing takes place. Prior to the purchase of the home by the Mancino family, it had been restored by Don and Kathleen Carney and used as their antiques shop.

At the location of the second Washburn home, all that remains of this farming complex is the barn, which is the home of the Indian Opening Antiques Center.

The area which is closer to the point of Indian Opening Rd. and Rt. 20 was the location of the house. Today, Gary Matteson offers his lobster dinners at this site during the week of the Antiques Show.

We conclude our walk with the building now known as Stone Lodge Antiques. It was the third of the Washburn homes in this section of Bouckville. In the Madison-Bouckville area, stone structures are usually made of cobblestones. This building is a great example of cut stone.

Constructed in 1834, it was the home of Chauncey Crain, a renowned scales manufacturer. Mr. Crain's career spanned the period from the 1840's through the early 1880's. One of his inventions was the "Double-Bar Family Steelyard" scale, patented in 1872. An example of his expertise in scale making can be seen at the Cazenovia Public Library in Cazenovia, N.Y. A model of the scales, which had to be submitted at the time of patenting, is featured in their display case along with other items produced in Madison County. There was also a tinsmith at one time in this building. He plied his trade for the benefit of all.

This concludes our walk up Bouckville's main street. If you are attending this year's show, I hope you will trace the route and see for yourself some of Bouckville's finest structures.