



GROOMS TAVERN GAZETTE

Summer 2016

Friends of Historic Grooms Tavern

P.O. Box 1166 Clifton Park, NY 12065
www.grooms-tavern.com

CLINTON'S BIG DITCH and the REXFORDS and KNOWLTONS

by Isabelle Prescott

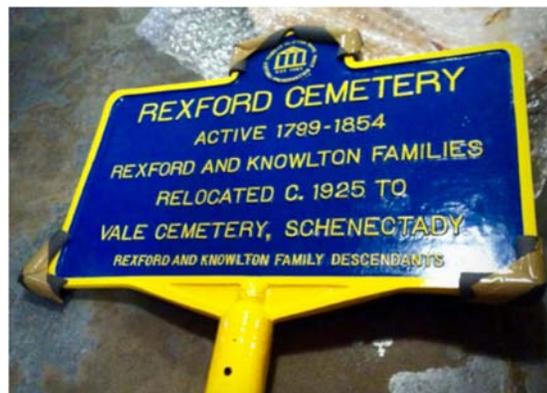
How much do you know about the Erie Canal? Did you realize that it went right through Rexford and Clifton Park along the Mohawk River? When it was completed in 1825, the canal was considered one of the wonders of the new world and was a sense of intense pride to New York and the nation. The Erie Canal was more than twice as long as any canal in Europe and boasted heroic feats of engineering including dramatic aqueducts like the one built at Rexford.

According to Doris Schaus of the Rexford family, at the time of the planning, Edward Rexford was an acquaintance of Governor Dewitt Clinton and helped, through his political connections, to encourage stopovers and other amenities at his village of Rexford Flats along the canal.

There is no doubt about the amazing influence that the canal had on the lives along its route including the community of Rexford Flats and the Town of Clifton Park. The Rexford family was instrumental in helping to shape the economy, culture, character, and identity of what became our community.

The Rexford House still stands as a monument to our heritage on the southwest corner of Rt. 146 and Riverview Road today. The Knowltons, a family who owned the land where the present-day Edison Club is located, were intermarried with the Rexfords, and together they were buried in a family plot on Riverview Road. Eventually, many of the tomb stones were moved to Vale Cemetery in Schenectady.

A new historic marker will be erected in June 2016 at what was the site of the Rexford Flats Cemetery across the road from the Edison Club. At a town board meeting, descendants of these two families, Barbara Scott from Chicago and Jackie Crucien from Pennsylvania, will be gifting the sign to the Town of Clifton Park as a memorial to honor the importance of their families in helping to shape our community of today.



So as you drive by the new marker, be sure to take a look and remember the significance of the Erie Canal and the families of our past in shaping our lives of today.

Clinton's Big Ditch and the Rexfords and Knowltons

Memories of Aunt Margierite

Our Early Connection Between Clifton Park and Hawaii.

Calendar of Events



Vol 9.2

FOHGT Monthly Board Meetings are on the Fourth Monday of each month and held at the Grooms Tavern from 7 pm to 9 pm. Meetings are open to the public.



AUNT MARGUERITE

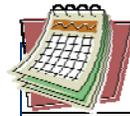
by Pauline Boehm

My first memories of my Aunt, Marguerite Yager, go back to when I spent much of a summer and fall living at her house on Plank Road while my mother was in the hospital. It was a big change from living in the city of Schenectady. Plank Road was a dirt road at that time and behind her house there were wooded hills where her son, my cousin Reynold, would go hunting for snakes with which to scare my four-year old self.

My aunt was a very down to earth, practical woman. She married Herb Yager in 1929, the year of the Great Depression, and they were as she liked to call "were poorer than church mice". When they were first married they rented a house on Main Street, in the hamlet of Rexford and it was the coldest house she had ever lived in and she hated it. Aunt Marguerite never unpacked her good dishes because she was always waiting to move. Her uncle Charlie, who owned and farmed quite a few acres on Plank Road, gave them some of his land and my uncle built a house.

They had two children; Kay and Reynold. She always wanted four children but she said she wouldn't bring more children into the world than she could support. She was always practical. Aunt Marguerite finally got to unpack her good dishes and didn't my cousin Kay drop one of them. Some mothers might have gotten angry but my aunt told Kay not to fret, she didn't do it on purpose and it **was** only a dish after all.

I grew to love living with them that summer. My aunt had a garden where she grew vegetables. There was enough to eat and enough to can for the winter. One time a storm had blown most of the peaches from the trees in a nearby orchard. The owner of the orchard was selling the fallen peaches very cheaply so my uncle went and picked up a bushel or more. My aunt stayed up most of that night canning peaches. Aunt Marguerite was never idle. She was a phenomenal baker on weekends she would bake pies and cakes because Sunday afternoon was a time that friends and family would stop by while out for their Sunday rides. My cousin Reynold was killed years later in a freak elevator



Upcoming Events

Farm Fest	September 17th & 18th
Annual Meeting	October TBD - Sunday
Holiday Open House	December TBD- Sunday

accident. He had just gotten married a short time before. Eventually my aunt couldn't live in the house on Plank Road anymore because it was too filled with memories of Reynold. She and my uncle moved to Mechanicville. When my uncle died she remained alone in the house.

Well into her 80's my aunt would walk to a local church every morning to cook for Meals on Wheels. She brought her neighbor next door lunch every day. When she was around 90, Aunt Marguerite decided it was time to go into a nursing home. It was during that time that I really came to know her best. Every Sunday for ten years I would drive to Maplewood Manor in Ballston Spa to visit her. She loved cider donuts so I would always bring her two or three. Before she would even open the bag she would tell me to bring one to the woman in the next room because she also really liked cider donuts. Then we would talk and she would tell me about her days living in Jonesville with her aunt and Uncle Dora and Cornell Burke. This was when she was a night time operator at the phone "company" before she was married. The phone "company" at that time was housed in what is now the home of Ron and Gail Winters.

My aunt told me about how sickly she'd been as a child and how often Doc MacElroy would make house calls to care for her but she lived to see her 100th birthday. Her granddaughters gave her a party at the nursing home. Although she had never been one to complain, she often told me then that she didn't know why "the Good Lord is keeping me here. I'm no good to anyone." I told her she was good for me and that I looked forward every Sunday to hear her stories. She didn't live to see 101. I miss her dearly, especially on Sundays, but can still visit her at the Jonesville Cemetery where she, my uncle and her son Reynold all reside.



Please remember to pay your dues if you have not already done so. The address is **P.O. Box 1166 Clifton Park, NY 12065.**



Our Early Connection with Hawaii

Written by Larry Syzdek, President Historic Grooms Tavern

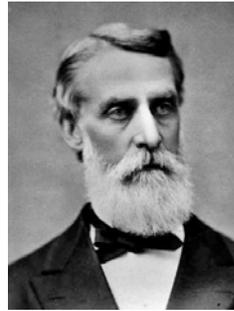
During a Historic House Tour in Clifton Park, I was assigned as host to the historic Garnsey home. It was then that I met the present owner who is Hawaiian and that learned the connection between our area and Hawaii.

On January 25, 1822, Charles Reed Bishop was born to Maria (Reed) and Samuel Bishop in Glen Falls, New York. Charles' mother died during the child-birth of his brother and his father later died when he was six. Raised by his grandfather on a farm in Warrensburg, Bishop finished his formal education at the eighth grade in the village school.

In 1846, at age 24, he traveled with his friend William Little Lee from Hudson Falls and around Cape Horn to the Oregon Territory. They stopped in Hawaii on the way for provisions. Here Lee was recruited to stay as the second trained lawyer in the Hawaiian Islands and Bishop decided to stay as well. Charles became an investor



of a sugar cane plantation on the Island of Kauai and became a partner in shipping merchandise that supplied the California gold rush.



Bishop married Bernice Pauahi Paki, of the royal House of Kamehameha in 1850. His long and successful career in Hawaii resulted in establishing the first chartered bank in the Kingdom and in 1853 he was elected as representative to the Hawaiian Kingdom legislature.

In honor of his wife, Bishop helped establish and was a major donor to the Kamehameha Schools and for many years he was the president of the Hawaiian Chamber of Commerce. Bishop lived to be 93 and died in 1915.

Surprising as it may seem, a farm boy, from Glens Falls and Warrensburg, became a leading figure in the development of the Hawaiian Islands and their evolution toward statehood.

Updates:

Work on the Tavern's second floor public meeting room should start soon. Donations are still needed toward the restoration of the Black Smith Shop!



This is a photo of back plate in the fireplace at the Grooms Road Tavern from 1764. And a current photo of the fireplace.



Volunteers Needed! To help decorate for the holidays and to provide refreshments at events.
Members Needed! We are always looking for new members!



www.groomstavern.com

Friends of Historic Grooms Tavern

P.O. Box 1166

Clifton Park, NY 12065

Friendsofhistoricgroomstavern@yahoo.com

