

VILLAGE OF SPRINGWATER

### HISTORY OF THE TOWNSHIP OF SPRINGWATER

By Reid Robinson

"By an act of the New York State Legislature, a new township was erected on April 17th 1816, to be taken from the townships of Naples and Sparta in the County of Ontario".

Thus the township of Springwater was formed by taking land from the townships of Naples to establish the eastern boundary and Sparta to mark the western boundary. It is approximately eight miles in an easterly and westerly direction and about six miles in a northerly and southerly direction; Its northern boundary is slightly longer than its southern one.

Livingston County was erected February 23, 1821, from lands of Ontario and Genesee counties. This would make the Township of Springwater nearly five years older than Livingston County.

The early surveys of this area were made during the summer and fall of 1789, by Hugh Maxwell, The region had already been divided into lots and ranges which were given numbers. The township is in the fifth and sixth ranges.

It would be difficult for the casual

observer to locate the boundaries of the township as described in the early survey or notes. The following paragraphs were copied from Col. Maxwell's Field Notes "Began the north line of town Aug 25, 1789, between lot 7 and 8 in the fifth range at a small mountain oak, which is the east line. (This is the north east corner of the township of Springwater) running west. The first mile is 160 rds. down a steep hill, the growth is mountain and black oak and chestnut: the soil hard and dry 126 rods on a better soil the growth black and white oak, chestnut, maple and basswood and others to a handsome brook running northward, the rest of the miles is good: Second mile began to rise the hill and in 40 rds, it grew very steep. The growth is oak, a chestnut, white wood and others; the mile brought me to the top of the hill: 3rd mile a gradual descent to the west the growth is oak and chestnut. The land is good: 4th mile 48 rods to a brook running southerly and 206 rods to another. The growth of timber in this mile and the land is such as the last mile and chiefly descends to the west, but not very steep: 5th mile, 240 rods to a small brook running southward The mile is chiefly to the westward

HISTORY OF THE  
TOWNSHIP OF SPRINGWATER  
From page

and is pretty good land; the timber is heavy chestnut and oak mixed with some white pine, maple beech and others; 6th mile, 60 rds to a small brook running northerly, then over a hemlock ridge to a handsome stream running northward (The corner is a large hemlock. This is the north east corner of the old township of Sparta) proceeding on west between lot no. 7 and no. 8 in the 6th range, 1st mile, 34 rods to a swamp and 20 rods to a stream running northward 26 rds to the upland, up a steep hill, hemlock about 20 rds, then a mixture of oak, chdstnut, beech and maple, basswood walnut and others, about 180 rds. >Still rising timber principally white pine 20 rds brought me to the top of the hill, then a gradual descent to the west timber still pine 2nd mile descending west to the west 240 rds. timber oak, pine etc. brought me to a sunken swamp brook running northerly, then flat land 6 rds to a handsome brook, running northerly. Flat land good, third mile rising land 100 rds and descending south, timber oak etc. underwood very thick descending to the westward, timber as before, 160 rds brought me to a brook running south, timber beech, maple, basswood ash and etc; cross a brook a number of times".

This is the northwest corner of the present township of Springwater. The above paragraph gives one a general idea of how the early surveyors of the colonial times kept notes of his daily activities.

The Seneca Indians were the last of the Red men to inhabit the valley. They were the keepers of the western gate of the Iroquois Confederacy. The Senecas hunted and fished in this region until about 1825 which was several years after they had given up their title to the land. They were allowed to fish and hunt from September first to December 31st of each year by the lawful right of a reservation made when they sold their lands.

During the hunting season, they made camp along the valley stream, between depot road and Mill street. Some of the hunters came from as far west as Squawkie Hill (town of Leicester from Mt. Morris).

While hunting the older members of the hunting party. looked after the camp and helped in caring for the deer brought back each night, to the camp by the hunters: Most of the hunting was done after the snow came which made it much easier to locate the deer.

Some years as many as thirty came to hunt. Among them might be Major O'Neil, son of Chief Cornplanter.

At the close of the day, each hunter would either bring to camp the deer he had killed that day or hang it up to be brought in the following day. If he brought in a deer he would drop it on the ground near the door of the cabin for the older men to care for.

The cabins or huts were large enough that a small fire could be had in the center on the dirt floor. A small opening was provided in the roof to let out the smoke.

A hunter, upon arriving at his cabin at the close of his hunting day would enter, hang his rifle on some pegs fastened in the wall, and ready himself for rest and something to eat. If the day was such that he got his foot gear wet he removed them and arranged for drying them near the fire for food he placed a forward quarter of venison near the fire so that it would roast. While the meat was roasting he wrapped himself in his blanket and lay down on a bunk of hemlock bought covered with animal skins with his feet toward the fire and went to sleep. The fire would die down after an hour or so. he would then rouse up and slice off for himself a piece of roasted venison, replenish the fire and go back to sleep for another hour or two. He would continue to eat and sleep through out the night. As soon as daylight came he was ready to put on his dry footgear, take down his gun and take to the woods for another day of hunting.

During the day, the ones who stayed in camp, skinned and quartered, the deer and collected wood for the fires. The foreward quarters were used for venison in the camp.

It was not uncommon in the early part of the nineteenth century for Indian families to come to the valley an camp for sometime. The squaws were adept at weaving baskets wich they sold in the village store or were peddled from house to house by the children. Another source of income was from the sale of wild berries when they were in

Continued on page 27

## HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF SPRINGWATER From page 25

season, which they picked and peddled. Sometimes the berries or baskets were traded for whiskey; both the squaws and their partners were sure to get drunk whenever they could make such a deal. Under these conditions, the way to camp became a long one, so long that both squaw and partner might be found lying drunk beside the trail with their children gathered beside them.

The Seneca nation was not the first of the Indian people to dwell in the Springwater Valley. When the Senecas, part of the Iroquois Confederacy came is more or less conjecture: some writers estimate it to be no more than four or five hundred years before it was visited by white men. Since the Iroquois Confederacy was established about the year 1450, some members of the league must have been here before that date.

Artifacts found near the head of Hemlock Lake seem to indicate that a kind of Indian Culture existed there, perhaps, several thousand years earlier. On the village site near the lake have been found, stemmed spear points, stemmed broad points and jaw-line flint points, arrow points, beveled adzes, which are classified as belonging to the Lamokan Culture. This culture adjudged by the recent radioactive carbon test for charcoal seems to show the culture to be much older than earlier estimates had dated it.

Along with Lamokan artifacts were found the more recent triangular flint arrow points of Senecas. Perhaps, as many as four or five different Indian Cultures dwelt in this area judged by artifacts found here of the Laurentian, Hopewellian and Middlesex Cultures.. This valley might have been inhabited as much as five thousand years ago.

The Springwater Valley was entered from the north by a trail which came over Bald Hill. At the south end of Bald Hill, was a village located partly on lands now owned, by Mazzola, Hoppough, Allen and Pullar. The trail led westward from this village to the one at the head of Hemlock Lake also Northward to the west shore of Canadice Lake. The trail from the Hemlock Village passed southward through the Valley and became part of the trail down the Cohocton River.

The village was call Middletown at first because it was geographic, located about half way between Bath and Canadaigua. At the establish of the township the name of the village and township were renamed to Springwater. Principally through the insistence of Seth Knowles who reasoned that it should be so named because of the many springs of clean water that flow to the Valley from its sides.

The Springwater township is the largest one in Livingston County, comprising an area of about 50 square miles measuring some 32,562 acra.

The Cohocton River has its beginning from springs located in the easte part of the township. The Limekiln creek and the Lawrence Gull creek have their confluence about one half mile north of the village and continue northware to the inlet to Hemlock Lake.

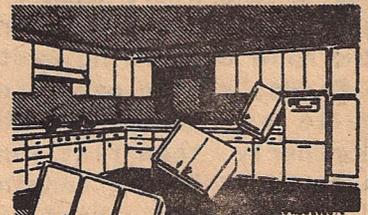
To be continued next week



# save on

# KITCHEN CABINETS

*...make your kitchen a  
dream the inexpensive  
way!*



## KITCHEN CABINETS GALORE



All types. All  
Sizes. All  
styles! Here's  
the easy way  
to beautify  
and mod-  
ernize your  
kitchen. Talk  
it over with us.

## Completely Installed

Easy  
Budget Terms

COMPLETE BUILDING & CARPENTER SERVICE  
**BERNHARDT  
LUMBER INC.**

PHONE 367-2500  
HEMLOCK N.Y.