

SAND LAKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
Jan. 18, 1999

HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS

To Editorial Board

In the September issue of Sand Lake Historical Highlights was an item "Save your family memories". The Circle Theater Players and the Sand Lake Historical Society were requesting family memories on their ancestors immigration. As a result Joan Fuess has received eight interesting short essays on this subject. Our plan is to use this material in future issues of the Historical Highlights. My question is

- 1 Do we use each of these essays as written? or
- 2 Do we combine them into one or more articles. This would mean that we would need a rewrite editor to use the information write the story, or stories.

Please read the attached stories and consider what option we should follow. If the 2nd option is used, could you help in the rewriting, or do you know a good creative writer that could do the job.

the attached essay are

- 1 My son the Immigrant; Tmar Gordon story of adoption.
- 2 Memories of the Henkel family; Helen Radz Ruether her Great Grandfather from Germany
- 3 Memories of the Radz Family; Helen Ruether
- 4 Bloody Alps; Doris Shaver tale of five saloons in the Alps.
- 4
- 5 Memories of the Julius Rymiller Family, Taborton
- 6 One-Room Schoolhouse; Elsie Dobert Cann story of District #11
- 7 One-Room Schoolhouse; Iona Mosher story of District #9
- 8 Jennilee Young Finn-- Arrival; Jen story of coming from Korea

Who are the members of the EDITORIAL BOARD? you or any one interested in the above or in any future articles for the Historical Highlights. We are looking for help

Copies to	Andy Mace	Barbara Mohan.
	John Allendorph	Michele Sprague
	Bea Danks	Pat Detmar
	Joan Fuess	Marg Larsen

Bob Lilly  
37 Lilly Lane  
Averill Park, 12018  
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Note I will be away Jan. 27, through Feb. 17 I will get in touch with then.

## MY SON THE IMMIGRANT

JONAH WOLF GORDON CHRISTIANSON WAS EXACTLY 2 MONTHS OLD WHEN HE MADE THE JOURNEY HOME TO SAND LAKE FROM A MATERNITY HOSPITAL IN TBILISI, REPUBLIC OF GEORGIA. IN SEPT. 1995, SCOTT AND I HAD FLOWN TO MOSCOW, AND SPENT 5 EMOTION-FILLED, SURREAL DAYS AND NIGHTS GETTING TO KNOW OUR NEW SON, SIGHTSEEING, AND BEING WINED AND DINED BY OUR RUSSIAN AND GEORGIAN INTERMEDIARIES, ALL OF WHOM TREATED US LIKE HONORED FRIENDS INSTEAD OF THE DESPERATELY YEARNING CLIENTS WE IN FACT WERE. JONAH WAS TINY, THIN, ALREADY SHOWING THE EFFECTS OF INADEQUATE AMOUNTS OF NUTRITION. BUT HE WAS EXTREMELY ALERT, EVEN CONFIDENT - HIS EYES NEVER LEFT MINE WHILE I HELD HIM. AND HE HAD THE FACE OF A GORGEOUS LITTLE ELF WITH HUGE BLUE EYES AND SMALL, EVEN FEATURES. HE GAINED A WHOLE POUND THE FIRST WEEK WE HAD HIM HOME. AND HE NEVER STOPPED.

*Single  
Side*

HE IS 3 YEARS AND 3 MONTHS OLD NOW, AND A VIBRANT, LOVING, TALKATIVE, ROOTIN' TOOTIN' LITTLE BOY AMERICAN BOY. HE IS PART OF THIS LANDSCAPE NOW. HE PETS AND FEEDS THE HORSES AT THE MARTIN FARM, HE PLAYS WITH OUR NEIGHBORS, COLIN AND PATRICK AND RILEY. HE GOES FOR LONG WALKS IN UNION CEMETERY WITH OUR DOG, TULU. HE IS AN IMMIGRANT, LIKE HIS GRANDMOTHER WHO ARRIVED FROM YUGOSLAVIA IN THE U.S. IN 1944, A REFUGEE FROM NAZI PERSECUTION. LIKE HIS MATERNAL GREAT-GRANDPARENTS WHO ARRIVED FROM HUNGARY IN 1890. LIKE HIS SCOTTISH AND IRISH PATERNAL GREAT-GRANDPARENTS WHO SETTLED IN BUFFALO AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY. HIS JOURNEY - OF HOPE AND LOVE AND SECURITY - LINKS HIM PROFOUNDLY TO HIS LINEAGE OF ADOPTED ANCESTORS. EQUALLY IMPORTANTLY, HE IS GEORGIAN BY BIRTH. AND WHILE WE WILL NEVER KNOW THE NAMES OR WHEREABOUTS OF HIS BIRTHPARENTS, WE WILL TEACH HIM EVERYTHING THAT TWO EDUCATORS CAN LEARN ABOUT HIS NATIVE COUNTRY. WE WILL TRAVEL TO GEORGIA - A CIVILIZATION WITH GREAT LITERARY AND CULINARY TRADITIONS - IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

TAMAR GORDON  
SCOTT CHRISTIANSON  
OCTOBER 24, 1998



## **Excerpts from Memories of the Henkel Family**

Asmus Henkel was born in 1800 in Germany, his wife Martha Ringler was also born in Germany in 1801.....Coming over on the ship they met the Radz (Rhutz) family migrating from Friedewald, Province of Hessen.....

Asmus and Martha had two sons, one of whom was accidentally killed in New Baltimore while crossing the Railroad track with a farm wagon....

....Martha died in 1871 and Asmus spent his remaining years with Catherine and Nicholas on their large farm in Barberville, Town of Poestenkill. He must have had a good disposition as the grandchildren spoke of him with great affection. One of the things I remember about him was that he had charge of the bee hives and that the bees never stung him while swarming, etc. He lived to be 92 years of age and is buried with his wife in Barberville Cemetery.

The Henkels from Detroit visited the Radz quite often and it was during one of these visits that Elizabeth married George Acenour (said to be a distant cousin). They lived Berlin and had three children...

I have a very pleasant memory of visiting the Lizzie Acenour family at their home in Berlin one Sunday (probably 1914) when Auntie Henkel and her son, William and wife Augusta were here from Detroit. Our family had driven over Berlin Mt. that morning. Uncle Philip, Aunt Mary, Carrie and Lew came in the afternoon. We had a very pleasant day.

Helen Radz Ruether  
Great Granddaughter of  
Asmus and Martha Henkel  
June 1979

## **Excerpts from the Memories of the Radz Family**

**Nicholas Radz, Sr. was born June 26, 1826 in Friedewald, Germany, Province of Hessen.....**

**Coming over on the ship from Germany, Nicholas met Catherine Henkel and her Family. The Henkels stopped in New York City while the Radz family continued North to \*Steam Mill, Town of Sand Lake in Rensselaer County. Later Catherine and Nicholas were married and settled in Steam Mill in a log house, where at least seven of their nine children were born.**

**Sand Lake Mt. joined Berlin Mt. to the East, and the Emigrants worked at cutting down the virgin forests. The area abounded in saw mills mostly operated by water power from the area streams, Steam Mill being the exception. Naturally when the forests were exhausted the workers had to look for a livelihood elsewhere. Nicholas purchased a farm on Berlin Mt. in the vicinity of Kendall Pond, also quite close to where the Boston Post Road ran at that time.....there was good soil on the mountain for farming but the Market (Albany) was too far away, so after a few years Nicholas and Catherine bought the Whyland Farm in Barberville, Town of Poestenkill.....**

**Nicholas, Sr. was a hard working farmer who raised nine children and retired in his old age, leaving the farm to his daughter libbie who had to remained at home to "look after" her parents. The house in the Summer time was always overcome with relatives and friends. The Hessers and Ewers from New York, the Henkels from Detroit. As one of the younger grandchildren, I only remember my grandparents in their later years. Grandpa sitting in the large sitting room where the South windows were filled with plants, one a huge Calla Lily. Grandma would be moving about the kitchen and her apron pocket always held either a penny or a pink mint candy for me.**

**\*beyond Taborton**

**Oral history - When Nicholas Jr. married, he and Amelia stayed with the senior Radz family for one winter and then moved down the road to a new house built by Andrew Radz, his brother. This home is located across from the Cemetery in Barberville. This is where Nicholas and Amerlia brought up their family. He was a farmer, and later supplemented his livelihood with mason work. He worked on chimneys and such as he did not mind climbing.**

**Helen R. Ruether  
Daughter of Amelia Taylor  
and Nicholas Radz, Jr.  
June 10, 1979**

## Bloody Alps

There were five saloons in Alps, in the early 1800's. All of the drunks made the town a dangerous place to live. The town was a meeting place because the farmers drove cows and sheep between Albany and Boston and every field had access to water for the livestock to rest. There was a big hotel for visitors. Brawls and fights were common place events. Some even resulted in death.

Once a man murdered another man in a robbery incident, trying to steal his money from the livestock sale. He buried his body under a pile of rocks. He finally watered on his death bed. A relative of mine would go to Troy and pick up piece work from Cluett's and return to Alps to make the buttonholes for shirts. The town, being so violent, the horse was saddled up and rode non stop thru town.

Told to Linda Ormsby by  
Doris Shaver

Arnold Garner was a butcher. He bought his meat from the Terry Pork Store and Wilson's. He peddled it door to door. He had to use blocks of ice in warmer weather. It was the children's job to scrub the truck out at the end of the day. Each of the six children were given a chicken and was responsible for its care. When it was grown, it was killed and dressed and sold on the meat truck route. The money was used for school clothes. This occurred during the depression years.

This was Doris Shavers father and her five Brothers and sisters

### Jennilee Young Finn -- Arrival Story

It's a long way from Korea to Glass Lake. Our family's story begins in early December 1983 with an orientation for prospective adoptive parents at Parsons Child and Family Center. Jen was "home" for the first time in the morning on June 29th. A lot happened to all of us in the months in between! There were parent group sessions where we explored our attitudes toward being adoptive parents and an inter-racial family. We had a home visit by a social worker and a home study report. There were forms to fill out, papers to sign and, all along, Jennilee was being born thousands of miles away!

Jen (Young Jin Lee) was born in Jun La Buk-Do (province), South Korea, on Valentine's Day 1984 and spent her early days at Angel Babies' Home and later at the home of a foster mother in Seoul. We saw our first pictures of Jen on May 22nd (and fell in love immediately!). We did over the baby's room (in pink, of course), older brother Chris "practiced" giving a bottle to an Asian baby doll we bought, and called the relatives. Jen arrived at Albany Airport (in the arms of a trained escort) at one o'clock in the morning June 29th. She was 3 1/2 months old. After a long trip from halfway around the world, Jen "came home" wide awake and looking all around, not afraid or tired but observing everything about this new place and these strange people.

We spent our first night together as a family sleeping Korean-style on the living room floor. Home at last! Jennilee was formally adopted into our family at the Rensselaer County Courthouse in Troy on February 6th, 1985 and became a naturalized U.S. citizen on September 11th. There are a number of inter-racial adoptive families in the Sand Lake - Poestenkill area and, for many years, some of us got together at a weekly playgroup at Sand Lake Town Hall. Our children (and our families) continue to share a special bond as they grow older.



### **Excerpts from Memories of the Julius Rymiller Family, Taborton**

Henry Rymiller left Taborton in the winter of 1904 when he was 18. He worked his way to NYC by cutting ice on the Hudson River, going from ice house to ice house, heading South until he reached New York. Two of his friends accompanied him. He remained in NYC for about 10 years.

Upon arriving in NY, he went to work for Chris Momrow (who was also from Taborton) at the Mountain Ice Co. Many of the Taborton men in that period did exactly the same thing. Henry contracted Malaria from the dampness in Brooklyn and was told to return North.

Upon returning North, he met Grace Wagar of Spring Avenue Ext. and was married in 1915. They acquired a retail milk route in Troy, then purchased a farm on Sharp Road in Brunswick where he lived out the balance of his life.

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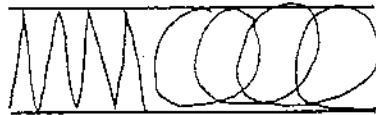


**The One-Room Schoolhouse  
Taborton, New York  
District #11**

One-room schools are seldom seen in the U.S. today. These are the memories I have when attending the Taborton schoolhouse from approximately 1928 - 1934 (Grades 1 through 5). After that, the schoolhouse closed and everyone attended the school built in Sand Lake (now called the Middle School).

Most of the children that attended the one-room schoolhouse walked a short distance but those that lived the farthest had to walk a little over two miles. In the winter, some of the days were so cold we couldn't attend school for fear of frostbite. The last several years, the men in the area who had cars were hired to drive the children to school. The teachers roomed with the William Lindeman family or the Walter Dobert family. Some of the teachers I remember were Miss Hollingsworth, Miss Shufelt, Miss Gieser, and Miss Pulver.

I don't remember too much about the classes, except that each class would go up to the front of the room to recite their lessons. One class I do remember was penmanship from the Palmer method book. I remember doing lines up and down between the lines and circles between the lines (see below), then the alphabet, both capital and small letters.



We had a prayer and said the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag each morning. The desks and seats were anchored to the floor, with the desk part fastened to the seat of the person in front of you. There was a large stove in the center of the floor. The wood was stored in a room as you enter the building. The windows were on both sides and in back of the room. There were two blackboards in front of the room, one on each side of the door.

Several years before the school closed (around 1934), a new large crock water cooler was purchased. It had a spigot and a large crock type cover for the water. Everyone drank out of the same cup.

The school was built on Little Bowman Pond (on the site of the third house on the right past UCC church in Taborton) and each teacher had her share of varmints (snakes, frogs, crayfish etc.) placed by the boys to scare her to death when she opened her desk drawers or pulled out her chair. The Pond had a good supply of these creatures to her horror and the children's delight.

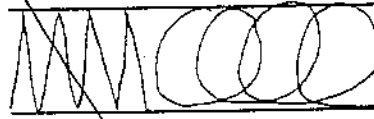
In the winter during lunch hour, the children would skate on the ice or just slide around. It was fun if you had skates or maybe could borrow some once in awhile. In warmer weather, the children would catch frogs and other crawly things. Some of the children

ended up with wet feet; a few even fell in the water. At recess, we also played games like "Kelly, Kelly, Over" or "Tag."

The school was very near the Church and when a funeral was taking place, we would try to run to the school windows to watch and see the procession go up to the cemetery. Years ago, when a member died, the church bell was tolled once for each

years, the children and adults in the room were asked to sing and listen to school. The teachers roomed with the William Lindeman family or the Walter Dohert family. Some of the teachers I remember were Miss Hollingsworth, Miss Shufelt, Miss Gieser, and Miss Pulver.

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As the one-room schoolhouses closed, the schools became very modern with all sorts of material aids as well as the electric age of computers. When the children finished sixth grade in the one-room schoolhouse, they were able to do arithmetic and read very well. Today, the news stories say that reading skills of our present students are very poor. At least in the one-room school, you were taught the three "R's" of reading, writing, and arithmetic even though we didn't have all the advantages of today. My memories bring a feeling of a time when school was fun and we were with our friends, neighbors, brothers, and sisters all learning together in one room.

Elsie Dohert Cann  
May 1995

One-Room Schoolhouse  
Sand Lake, N.Y.  
MILLER SCHOOL DIST. #9

Miller School District #9 was located about 2 miles east of the Town of Sand Lake traveling up the Taborton Mountain.

The school averaged in size 48' x 36. The entry way was used for the supply wood for the pot belly stove which stood in the center of the room. There were approximately 4 rows of desks with 5 desks in each row. Two students sat at each desk. The desks and seats were anchored to the floor with the desk part fastened to the seat of the person in front of you. Top part of desk for writing; underneath was room for keeping books and pads. Students used tablets for writing. All desks had an ink well. Pencils and straight pens were used.

An older student was hired at \$30.00 a year to do janitor work. He would arrive early, sweep the floor, clean the blackboards, put flag in the flag pole and get water from a nearby spring for drinking. This water was kept in a large crock container. A long handle dipper was used by the entire school for drinking.

Students walked to school from surrounding homes. The average number of students ranged 20 to 25.

To begin the day the teacher would appear in the doorway of the school and ring a bell. Time ranged from 9:00 AM to 3:30 PM. Each day began with the salute to the flag followed by one of the following songs: "My Country 'Tis of Thee", "Home Sweet Home," "Star Spangle Banner".

Grades ranged from first grade to eighth grade with approximately 4 - 5 students each grade. Students began school at different ages: age 5, 7 and 8. The following subjects were taught on a daily basis: English, Arithmetic, Geography, History and Spelling. Reading, Writing, Drawing and Physiology were taught once or twice a week. Students were often called to do work on the blackboard. The teacher called each grade up to her desk for teaching each subject. Grades were first to eighth grade. The teacher used the blackboard for writing subject matter, tests, etc. Books were handed down generation to generation - grade by grade. Spelling bees were held - usually for the whole school. Students used tablets for doing their work, writing, etc.

Coats and jackets were hung on hooks about the room. Each student brought their own lunch in a small pail, lunch box or paper bag.

Two toilets were provided beyond the building - one for girls and one for boys. Sears Roebuck catalogs were used for toilet paper. There was no facility for washing your hands - no towel or wash basin.

Dr. Reichard from the Sand Lake Averill Park area, came once a year and examined each student. He checked for deformities (structure). Tested hearing with a bell with different tones - which tone was louder than another. He used an eye chart to check eyes.

G. Everett Patrie, Superintendent of Schools, visited each month, to check the attendance register, etc.

Any student taking a Regents exam had to go to the school in Averill Park to take the exam.

For punishment you were kept in from recess or after school or a note was sent home to the parents.

The year began in September and ended in June without an Easter or Christmas recess. Everyday there was a 15 minute recess in the morning and one in the afternoon with an hour for lunch.

Name of some of the teachers:

Ruby Coons  
Marjorie Roberts  
Fannie Coons  
Mr. Murphy  
\*Octa Peck Houser  
Emma (Shier) Brown  
Snnetta Martin

Teachers from any distance from the school often boarded with Mrs. Elizabeth Reincke who lived a short distance from the school

In 1929 Averill Park Central School with grades Kindergarten through high school was built. Students who had attended Miller School District #9 and #11 were bused to the new Central School.

\*Octa Peck Houser from the Town of Poestenkill came to school by horse and buggy,

Iona G. Mosher  
October 1995