

Family Life in Early Buffalo

by Olga Lindberg



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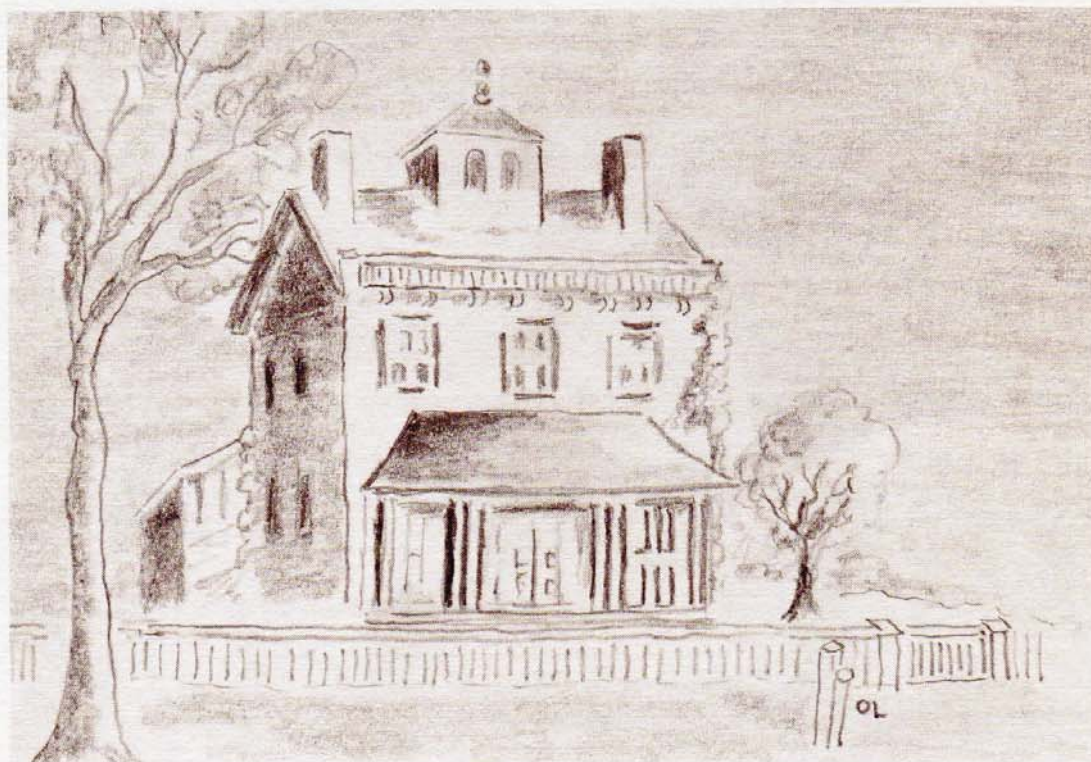
ADVENTURES IN
WESTERN NEW
YORK HISTORY

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An early pioneer dwelling, 1800's.



The residence of James D. Sheppard — Built in 1844

With Best Wishes

FAMILY LIFE IN EARLY BUFFALO 1800-1840

By Olga Lindberg

Olga Lindberg

The village of New Amsterdam, or Buffalo Creek as it was called in the early 1800's, was a rough frontier town — a cluster of cabins and frame houses, stores, and taverns, scattered along a muddy road full of tree stumps and potholes. The Holland Land Company had just finished surveying the land and opened it to settlers. Families were arriving daily from eastern states to purchase lots and build homes in the new territory.

To adventurers seeking a new life, the frontier presented a challenge . . . but to families with young children, who had left comfortable homes in the east to face the unknown hardships and deprivations of pioneer life, the future was fraught with uncertainties.

The wife found it difficult to adjust to the dreary surroundings and unceasing toil of the frontier. Alone much of the time in a remote cabin, she was awed by the solitude and oppressed by the silence of the woods. More frightening than the silence were the sounds of the night — the wolves howling around the cabin, and the screech of the panther and the wildcat in the deep forest. At first this lonely existence must have seemed almost unbearable, but large families were universal on the frontier and as her family increased, she learned to accept the rigors of the new life with remarkable courage.

There was a need for many children in the pioneer home. From dawn to dusk the girls helped their mothers to care for the younger children and to spin, weave, sew, cook, and make candles while the boys performed the outdoor chores — planting, hoeing, weeding, milking, and keeping the wood box filled and the fires tended. It was the pioneer wife who supervised all this activity and kept the household running smoothly.

Relying on her ingenuity and skills, she performed the many tasks, serving as teacher, nurse, and mother, and with the most primitive utensils, established a home in the alien land.

What a haven of peace the small cabin must have seemed to the weary father returning from a hard day of felling trees and clearing the underbrush! The welcoming warmth of the fire burning in the hearth . . . a cauldron of stew simmering over the logs . . . the flickering candlelight casting a glow on the baby asleep in the rough cradle, all gave him courage to continue his endless battle against the wilderness.

The pioneer wife played an important role in the settling of the frontier, but little has been recorded of her achievements. She displayed infinite patience, compassion, and understanding at a time when these qualities were most needed and by lending a helping hand and performing difficult and unfamiliar tasks cheerfully, she left a lasting imprint on the history of Buffalo.

History is not merely a narrative of great events — treaties, wars, and victories — it is a record of family life — the homes, manners, and customs of the people, their industry, and courage.

It is because of the firm foundations laid by these pioneer families that the City of Buffalo and the County of Erie grew and prospered down through the years.

THE PIONEER HOME

Upon arrival in the new territory the pioneer settler first built a rough shelter for his family, a lean-to of logs covered with bark. One whole side was open to the elements. Meals were cooked outdoors over a blazing fire, which was kept burning brightly all night long to protect the family and the livestock from wolves.

Next he would fell fifty or more trees for a one-room cabin. With the help of neighbors they boosted the framework into place, then rolled the logs up for the walls, securing them by notching at the corners and fitting them together. The cracks were filled with wood chips, moss, and mud. The roof was shingled with long strips of elm bark, and saplings were tied across them to hold the roof in place.

A fire pit was dug in the dirt floor, and the smoke escaped through a hole in the roof. As soon as possible, the pioneer built a fireplace of rocks and field stones. The chimney was made of small logs and sticks thickly plastered with clay. Sometimes a blanket served as a door, but for winter a heavy door of pine planks, suspended on wooden or leather hinges, kept out the wind. There was no glass for a window so an opening was cut in the wall and covered with greased brown paper.

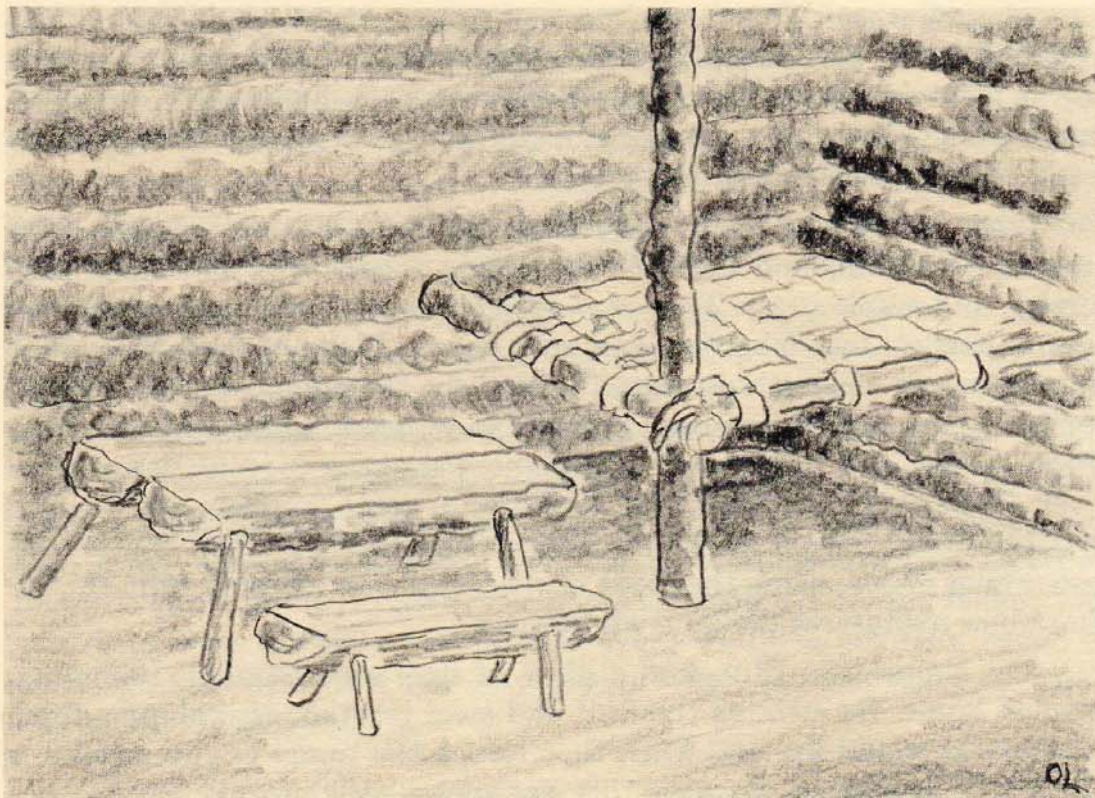
Such rough cabins were scattered along Main Street in Buffalo Creek. As more settlers arrived, stores, taverns, and schools were built, and by 1810, Buffalo was a village of about 100 dwellings with a population of from 400 to 500 people.

Pioneer families were self-sufficient and could make almost all the items they needed for their homes. Although they brought some items with them such as cooking utensils, bedding, clothing, tools, spinning

wheels, and looms, most of the furniture was made by hand from the wood which was so plentiful.

Tables and benches were logs split through the center with legs attached at the corners. A bedstead, known as a "horse" bedstead, or "Holland Purchase" bedstead, was built into one corner of the cabin by boring holes in the walls of the cabin and inserting two lengths of timber which rested on an upright post at the foot of the bed. Over this framework, strips of basswood bark were stretched for the bed spring, and a padding of straw, cattails, corn husks or dried leaves served as mattress. A blanket, and in very cold weather a deer hide or bearskin, was used as covering.

Cradles were needed in the ever increasing families, and a willow or reed basket sometimes was used, but a typical pioneer cradle was built of a hollowed-out log with board rockers.



The "horse" or Holland Purchase bedstead.

FOOD AND CLOTHING

For the first few years, a pioneer family had to "make do" with clothing they had brought along. These things were mended, patched and repatched, because there was no material to make new.

In summer the whole family went barefoot and bareheaded. In winter the housewife improvised boots or shoepacks of heavy blanket material, with soles of rawhide, or made moccasins of buckskin. During the cold winters, chilblains were a universal complaint — feet and hands long exposed to the cold became swollen and inflamed, itchy and very painful. Because of lack of other warm clothing, many suffered from ague, chills, and fever, and some did not survive those first rugged winters.

Men and boys wore britches of rawhide with deerskin jackets. The women's and girl's dresses were of homespun, with long, full skirts, petticoats, and snug bodices, sometimes with a neck cloth of linen. In summer sunbonnets were practical, but for cold weather the housewife wore a fur hat and a large linsey shawl draped about the shoulders.

As soon as possible the pioneer woman set up her spinning wheel and loom. She made cloth from wool of the sheep they brought with them, washing and combing the wool fibers, then twisting them into thread on her spinning wheel. This thread she wove into wool cloth on her loom. She grew flax in her garden and was then able to make linsey-woolsey, a cloth woven from wool and a linen thread. This cloth was lightweight, yet warm and durable. Tow cloth, a rough and sturdier material, was used to make her husband's heavy shirts and trousers.

Long before the white man came to the area, the Indians grew squash, pumpkin, and corn. Other Indian foods were chestnuts, wild apples, and maple sugar. They also collected roots, herbs, and wildberries — cranberries, huckleberries, and wild plums. Many of these they dried for winter use. Game was plentiful, and for their meat supply Indians hunted stags, wildcats, deer, wolves, black bears, and squirrels. Fish, ducks, geese, and turkey were abundant. Passenger pigeons flew over in huge flocks every year and were captured in great numbers and smoked over the fire to be kept for winter. Soon pioneer wives learned how to cook nourishing meals, using the foods of the forest and learning from the Indians how to preserve them for winter time.

The tinder box, flint, and a piece of steel were valuable items in a pioneer home. By striking the flint and steel together (scotching a flint) tiny sparks would fly, and when they struck the tinder or gun powder, a fire would be started. Because this was such a slow process, the fire was always carefully tended and kept burning.

Corn, a staple food, rough ground was served in many ways. Corn meal mush and milk was a standard dish, and hominy made from meal was tasty when served with bear or pork gravy. Johnny cake, or "journey" cake, so called because it would keep well on a journey, was made by mixing a thin batter of rough ground corn, sour milk, buttermilk, soda and salt, and cooking it slowly in a bake pan over the coals.

In times when food was scarce the pioneer wife prepared a dish from green wheat. She cut the wheat when the grain was in milk, dried it in the sun and then, rubbing the kernels out of the straw and chaff by hand, boiled them into a mash. When served with milk, molasses, or maple syrup it provided a nourishing dish.

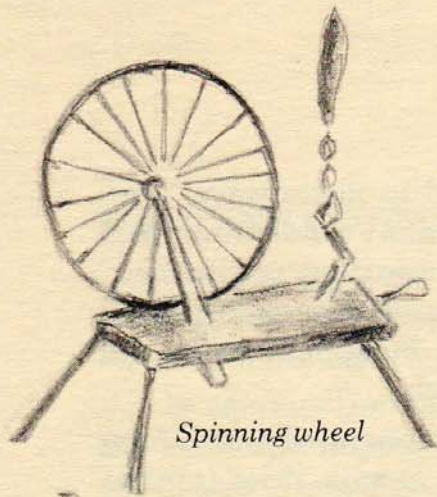
Other tasty dishes were apple tarts, puffs, cheese, and puddings. As a substitute for tea, dried apples were grated and steeped in hot water. Another hot drink was made by boiling hemlock branches and leaves, or herbs and certain wildflowers such as bee balm or chickory. Cider and applejack were popular drinks, and a beer was made from spruce and molasses. Rum, brandy, and whisky could be bought at the taverns.

Because the winters were long, it was important to preserve as much food as possible to carry the family through the cold weather. Meat was frozen and hung high in the trees to keep it from wild animals. In summer meat was dried, salted, or smoked and cut into strips called "jerky." Fruit, berries, and fowl were dried over the fire, and grasses, herbs, pumpkin rings, and apples were hung from the rafters in the cabin to dry.

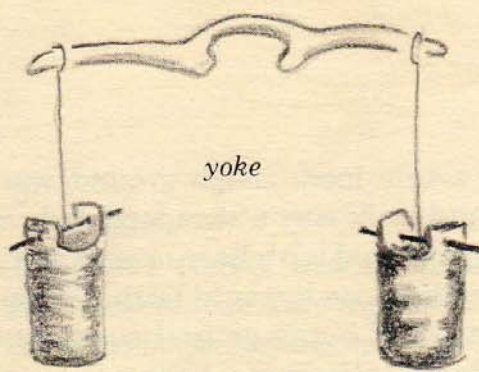
Every pioneer housewife planted and cared for a garden. Seed which they brought along, was sown by hand and "brushed in" with branches of trees dragged over the ground to cover them. The gardens were often planted between the stumps of trees which had been felled for the cabin.

Vegetables were scarce, but as early as 1804 a German settler, Samuel Helms, planted a small garden near The Terrace where he grew lettuce and a few other crisp greens. Carrying them in a large wicker basket on his head, he would peddle them from door to door in the village.

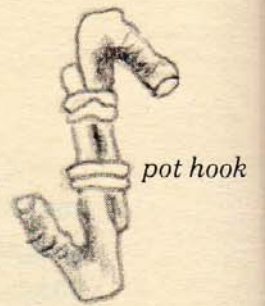
The pioneers soon learned to tap the maple trees and boil the sap in large iron kettles over open fires. Night and day the boys and girls would tend them, stirring constantly, until the syrup thickened into solidified maple sugar. Cut into cakes it was stored for winter. This and honey from wild bees were the only sweetenings available until peddlers began to travel through with their wagons bringing staple products such as sugar, tea, salt, and molasses.



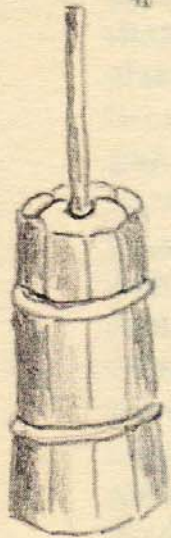
Spinning wheel



yoke



pot hook



churn

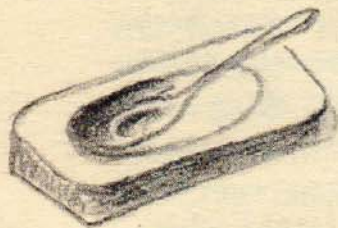


plate or wooden trencher



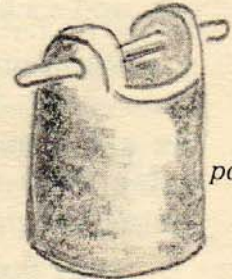
bake pan



spider



sauce pan



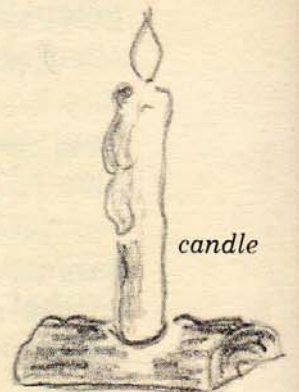
pail



piggin



bucket



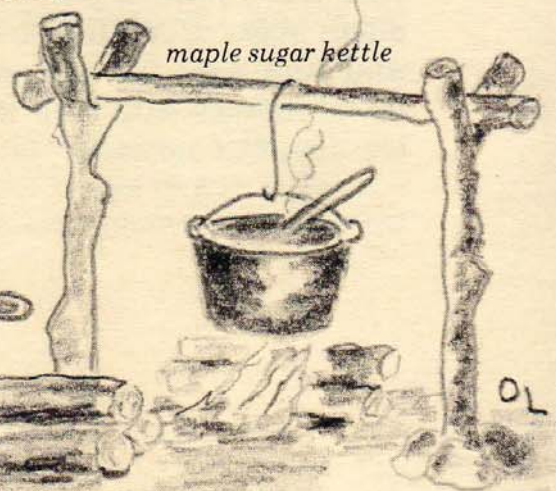
candle

UTENSILS

Young and old worked from dawn to dark. The women and girls washed and scrubbed, made candles from animal fat or soap by mixing boiling fat with homemade lye, churned cream into butter, ground corn, hunted pine knots for lighting the cabin, and herbs for medicine, and planted and tended the garden. Utensils and tools were scarce, and often the housewife had to invent and improvise crude substitutes.

All meals were prepared on the hearth. The stew pot was hung on a pole of green wood across the inside of the chimney. An iron skillet with three legs was set over the ashes for frying, and a covered dish, also on long legs was used as a bake pan. When meat was roasted it was hung in front of the fire on a rawhide thong and given a spin now and then to keep it turning.

There were no china dishes, so square wooden trenchers served as plates, with spoons whittled from wood. Cups of birchbark, and water buckets and bowls were carved from wood. The broom was a bundle of twigs tied together, and baskets were woven from reeds. A yoke carved from wood was used by the whole family for carrying heavy loads.



maple sugar kettle

CAPTAIN SAMUEL PRATT AND HIS FAMILY

On a brisk fall day in 1804, a vehicle drawn by a team of horses came jolting and swaying down Main Street into the village of Buffalo Creek. The horses, making their way among the stumps and hillocks in the rutty road were drawing a large coach, the like of which had not been seen before in the village. The vehicle had sturdy wheels and was suspended upon leather springs. The interior was upholstered and cushioned to lessen the jolts and bumps of the rough journey.

The faces of several children could be seen peering from the carriage windows, and seated beside them was a pleasant faced woman, and a young girl with a baby on her lap. Following the coach came two heavily loaded farm wagons, piled high with furniture and supplies, driven by the male members of the family, Captain Samuel Pratt and his two sons Asa, 16, and Pascal Paoli, 10.

As a boy, Captain Pratt had served in the American Revolution and now, a man of 40, was moving his large family to Buffalo. The demand for furs in Europe made trapping and trading a profitable business, and Captain Pratt had made frequent trips from his home in Vermont into the frontier country to buy furs. When passing through Buffalo he had been impressed by the favorable location of the village and had decided it would be a good place to establish a trading post.

It must have taken some persuasion to convince his wife, Esther, to leave their comfortable home in Vermont to face the uncertainties of the frontier, but, a sensible woman, she realized the advantages for her husband's business, so she reluctantly agreed to move. To make the long journey as comfortable as possible, Samuel Pratt had the large carriage specially built. They asked a niece, Polly Smith, aged twelve, to accompany them and to help care for the children — Pamela 12, Benjamin Wells 8, Esther 6, Hiram 4, and the baby, Lucy Ann. It was the two older sons, Asa and Pascal Paoli, who helped their father drive the farm wagons.

Captain Pratt built a log cabin for his family, and at Main and Exchange Streets a 2½ story frame house for his store, where the Indians gathered, bringing beaver, muskrat, fox, mink, wolf, and bear skins to trade for beads, guns, kettles, shells, and fire water. They respected Captain Pratt, and called him "Negurriyu" or "honest dealer." His other Indian name was "Hodanidoah" or "merciful man."

One day soon after the store was opened, Esther Pratt carried her baby sister, Lucy Ann, into the store and seated her on the counter. A



Captain Samuel Pratt

Seneca Indian woman suddenly entered, caught up the child, and fled toward the forest. She was soon overtaken, and the child was rescued. When asked her motive, the woman said that she had lately lost her own child and wanted this baby in its place. . . a harrowing experience for a family accustomed to the more civilized surroundings of the east.

In 1804, Captain Pratt's parents came to Buffalo, and lived with the Pratts. Frontier life was hard on older folks, and his father Aaron died in February, 1807, at the age of 65; his wife Mary passed away soon afterwards at the age of 62.

One time, the Pratts were all seated at the dinner table when one of the boys, Benjamin, ran into the house closely pursued by an Indian warrior known as "The Devil's Ramrod." The Indian, very angry, was brandishing his knife and threatening to kill the boy. After he had been subdued, with some difficulty, it was learned that the boy had been annoying him until he had become enraged. Finally, thrusting the knife savagely into the doorpost, the Indian strode away, muttering "Me no kill Hodanidoah's boy."

THE SCHOOLHOUSE

Nearly every pioneer family had children of school age, and on a chilly March evening in 1807 a group of townspeople gathered in Joseph Landon's tavern to raise money for a schoolhouse. By the light of a flickering candle, nineteen names were entered in a small book, and opposite each the amount he could pledge.

Samuel Pratt had four children of school age, Esther, Asa, Benjamin, and baby Lucy Ann, and his pledge of \$22.00 was the largest. The total amount pledged was \$157.37½, but these folks also promised to supply “nails, boards, shingles” and, most important of all — work.

The building was begun April 3, 1807, and there was an entry of 2½ gallons of whisky. No doubt the whisky added to the gaiety of the “raisin’ bee.” An entry of 2,000 shingles for \$6.07 on November 8, 1807, indicated that the building was near completion.

About the same time Mrs. Pratt and a group of ladies met to form the first religious society . . . and the schoolhouse was also used for church services, town meetings, and social gatherings.

In 1813, after the village was burned and the Commissioners were making restitution for the losses sustained by the townspeople, the value of the schoolhouse was listed at \$101.00, but the Commissioners generously allowed \$500.00 for a new schoolhouse.

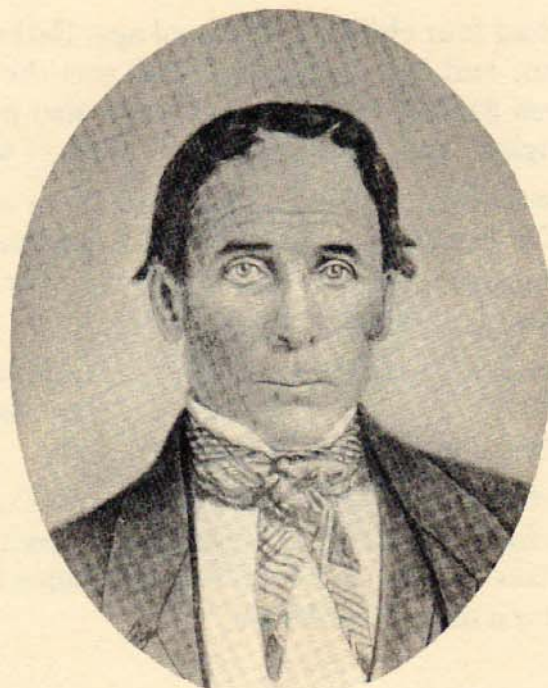
WILLIAM HODGE, INVENTOR

William Hodge, his 18-year-old wife, Sally, and their two small children arrived in Buffalo from Otsego County in 1805. They traveled in a party of twenty settlers and made the trip by flatboat from Utica up the Mohawk River, and by rowboat along the shores of Lake Ontario, portaging around the Falls and then along the shore of the Niagara River to Buffalo.

A young, energetic man of thirty, handy with tools, he soon completed a log cabin on the southwest corner of Main and Ferry Streets, near the Cold Spring, and began making furniture, pine tables and benches, window sashes, and coffins which he traded with his neighbors for food and supplies.

Sally, a true pioneer wife, immediately set about making the rough cabin into a comfortable home for her growing family. She planted a garden, had a swarm of bees, raised chickens, a cow, and sheep, and she also had a flock of geese, from whose feathers she made down pillows and feather beds.

One day two of the Hodge children, William and his sister, were playing near the house, when they were attacked by a fowl. William protected himself from the huge bird, but the little girl was so viciously attacked that her head was pierced by the strong beak. In the early days Buffalo was fortunate to have several doctors settle in the area, and they were called and attempted to operate on the child, but their efforts were in vain.



William Hodge

While threshing grain with a flail one day, William Hodge's active mind turned to simplifying the method of winnowing grain. He designed a fanning mill similar to one he had seen in New England, but the cast iron running gear and wire screens essential to the project were not available in the village. They could only be obtained in Utica, N.Y.

Having no transportation, William would have to walk to Utica, about 200 miles. Discussing the journey with Sally, he explained that he would be away all summer, and have to leave her alone with the children. No doubt Sally had misgivings, realizing the dangers she might have to face, but being a courageous and sensible woman, and having complete confidence in her husband's ability, said "I'm sure you can do it, William, why don't you make the trip and get the things you need?"

Thus reassured and encouraged, he started off on the 200 mile journey on foot, leaving Sally to care for the children, the cabin, the livestock, and the garden. In Utica he obtained the information and materials needed and returned through the forest, stopping sometimes with friendly settlers, but more often sleeping rolled in a blanket on the ground. The 400 mile round trip took all summer. Upon his return he found Sally and the children safe, and happy to have him home again.

After the war, with the help of a neighbor, Whipple Hawkins, a blacksmith, Hodge built a small casting furnace, the first in this area, and began turning out fanning mills. This timesaving device was a boon to

farmers and soon became a profitable business. Hodge's advertisements appeared frequently in the *Buffalo Gazette* —

FANNING MILLS AND SCREENS — the subscribers hereby give notice that they make and keep on hand for sale at their shop near Hodge's Tavern 2 miles from Buffalo, FANNING MILLS AND SCREENS of a superior construction and workmanship. Orders in the above line of business will be immediately attended to.

*William Hodge
Robert Busck
Buffalo
October 4, 1816*

Mr. Hodge's Fanning Mill might be considered as the first research and development project conducted in Erie County.

GAMALIEL ST. JOHN AND HIS FAMILY

Gamaliel St. John, a tool maker from Connecticut, came to Buffalo to build a jail. He did all the iron and stone work on the jail near The Terrace, and the building was completed in 1810. He also built a house for his large family on Main Street near Court. In June 1813, just before Buffalo was burned, Gamaliel and his son John were crossing the Niagara River on a scow, when the tow rope became entangled, and they were thrown into the river and both drowned. His wife, Margaret, then faced the responsibility of caring for their ten children all alone.

War was being waged along the Niagara frontier. On December 30, 1813, as word of the enemy's approach reached Buffalo, many of the townspeople fled, making their way out Main Street to Williamsville and Harris Hill. Close on the heels of the departing people, the enemy came, burning and pillaging the homes. Mrs. St. John, frightened for the safety of her family, bundled most of the children into a neighbor's wagon and sent them to safety, but she could not bear to see her home go up in flames, so she bravely stood her ground. She, her two teen-age daughters, Sara and Marie, and old Mr. Pettingill, a helper, remained behind to try to protect the property.

As the enemy drew near, Mrs. St. John defied them to set torch to the small house. She saw many of the surrounding homes go up in flames. She watched helplessly as her friend and neighbor across the way, Mrs. Lovejoy, was killed and her house burned. When things were at their worst, a soldier came to the St. John door. He was British, but she appealed to him for help. Uncertain what he should do, he offered to take her to his commanding officer.



Mrs. Martha St. John

On that bleak, snowy December day, a strangely assorted group left the St. John house. Mrs. St. John wrapped in an Indian blanket against the biting cold, accompanied the soldier as he led the way, followed closely by the two young girls and the old man. They hurried down Mohawk Street to the enemy headquarters at Niagara Road and Delaware Street.

The commanding officer, moved by the widow's story, directed the soldier to protect the house and turn marauders away. All day long he stood guard until the worst of the carnage was over. After the invasion, Mrs. St. John's house was the only dwelling left standing, and the jail and the blacksmith shop were the only other buildings not destroyed.

When the townspeople began to straggle back to the still smoldering village, she was able to offer many of them food and shelter, until they could rebuild their own homes and begin normal lives again.

The early settlers were of hardy stock. As Joaquin Miller, the poet once said—

The bravest battle that ever was fought;
Shall I tell you where and when?
On the maps of the world you will find it not;
It was fought by the mothers of men.

BUFFALO IN THE 1820's

The years immediately following the war were years of hardship . . . times of great privation and distress. Food was scarce, and many were threatened by starvation. To survive they lived on mush, wild game, and fish, and even ate roots and leaves from the trees to allay their hunger. However, despite these reverses, the pioneers began to rebuild, and, in 1814, the *Buffalo Gazette* reported —

Buffalo village which once adorned the shores of Erie and was prostrated by the enemy, is now rising again; several buildings are already raised and made habitable; contracts for twenty or thirty more are made and of them are considerable forwardness. A brick company has been organized. All that is required to re-establish Buffalo in its former prosperity, are ample remuneration from the government and PEACE. Buffalo has its charms, the situation, the prospect and the general health of the inhabitants to which we may add the activity and enterprise of the trade, the public spirit of the citizens and the state of society, all conspire to render it a choice spot for the man of business. . . .

A peace treaty between the United States and Great Britain was signed December 24, 1814, at Ghent, Belgium, and the glad tidings of peace penetrated to the most secluded cabins in the wilderness. An amount of \$50,000 was voted by the Legislature, and with other contributions from public and private sources, the reconstruction of the village continued. The townspeople began building larger homes of brick or frame. Carpenters, blacksmiths, and stone masons all contributed their skills, and soon the town was larger than before. Many new stores were opened, and merchants dispensed calico, thread, buttons, salt, tea, and other necessities, as well as straw bonnets, laces, and colorful ribbons to delight the ladies.

Roads leading into the town were widened and improved, the harbor was deepened so boats could carry goods up the Lakes, and in 1824, the Erie Canal was completed which provided a direct route to New York City, and Buffalo became a center of commerce.

SOCIAL LIFE DURING THE 1820's

During the early 1820's, social life was simple. Pioneer families had the knack of combining work with pleasure, and knew the true meaning of neighborliness. They visited to and fro and helped one another with house raisings, huskings, quiltings, and other chores, called "bees." When many hands were needed, they had a friendly gathering, and much hard work was accomplished amid gaiety and fun.

For a corn husking, families arrived early in the evening, by ox-team or farm wagon, and stopped at the house for a brief warming. Then all would adjourn to the barn where a pile of corn was ready for husking. The girls and boys sat in rows facing each other and soon, amid much hilarity, the corn was stripped of its husks. Lucky was the lad who found a red ear because he could then kiss all the girls in the room.

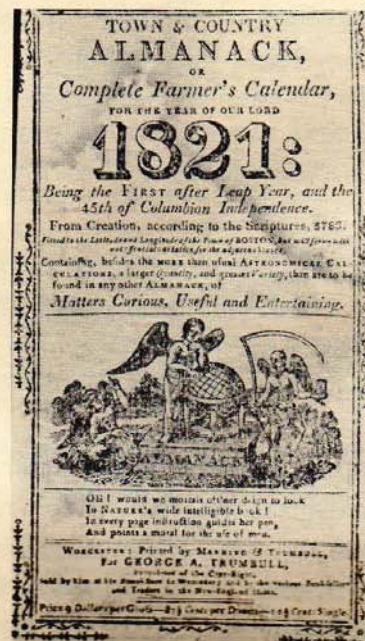
An apple or pumpkin paring bee was also a lively party. The young men pared and sliced the fall pickings for the girls to thread on long strings for drying. These apple and pumpkin rings were strung over the rafters in the kitchen to dry for winter use.

The women folk enjoyed a quilting bee when they assembled to quilt a pieced coverlet, stretched on a wooden frame. As they worked, they chatted, laughed, and exchanged bits of gossip.

These work sessions were usually followed by feasting, merry making, and dancing. Food was plentiful, a fiddler would provide the music, and dancers whirled to the lively tunes of "Walk Jaw-bones," "Geese in the Bog," "Fisher's Hornpipe," "Road to Boston," and "Mrs. Love, She's but a Lassie yet."

Such lively work meetings and an occasional wedding helped break the monotony of everyday life.

The Almanac furnished news, literature, amusement, and odds and ends of knowledge for a pioneer family. It was given a place of honor alongside the Bible in every home. Sometimes it was hung under the clock shelf in the kitchen where it was readily accessible to all members of the family.





In 1832, Buffalo became a city with a population of 10,119. The business section was along lower Main Street near the docks, and private residences and stores lined Main Street, Ellicott, Washington, Pearl, and Franklin Streets. These homes were large and comfortable, surrounded by gardens.

By this time the ladies were enjoying a larger selection of goods in the stores — including muslins, gingham, silks, velvets, imported bonnets, and some goods from abroad. The gentlemen wore suits of broadcloth, with linen cravats, and high beaver hats.

Buffalo had become the metropolis of upstate New York and “Queen City of the Lakes.”

THE FIRST PIANO

New settlers continued to arrive in Buffalo, and many brought with them favorite pieces of furniture. So it was with James D. Sheppard, a musician from England. He could not think of living in this primitive country without his pianoforte, so he brought it along. First, across the ocean on a sailing vessel and then on mule-drawn barge along the recently completed Erie Canal and finally, carried on the shoulders of six men from the docks up Main Street to the old Court House (where the Buffalo and Erie County Library stands today). It was in this location that Mr. Sheppard opened his music store.

The Indians were fond of music and liked to sing. They would gather on the steps of the old Court House, clad in blankets and moccasins, to "hear the big music box sing" and perhaps join in a song or two. One of the popular songs was "The Winds Whistle Cold."

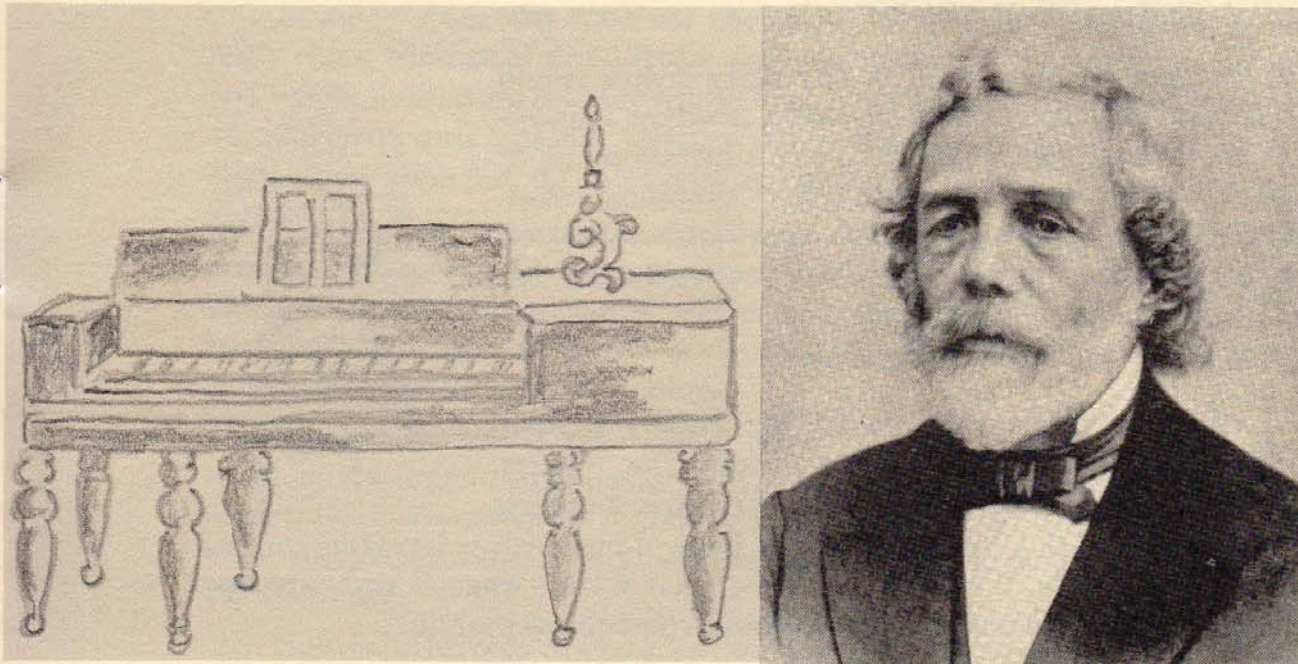
Mr. Sheppard, a man of culture and refinement, was born in Frome, England, January 16, 1798, and served as organist of St. Peter's Church in Frome, and as chorister of Wells Cathedral. At the age of 29, he arrived in Buffalo and opened his music store. One of his advertisements in a Buffalo paper in 1827 read —

PIANO FORTE WAREHOUSE — MUSIC AND FANCY STORE (No. 1 Eagle Bldg., Buffalo). J.D. Sheppard will keep constantly for sale large assortment of music publications and musical instruments including a number of fine tuned pianos (Made by persons from the 1st piano manufactory in Europe) Flutes, Clarinetts, Bassoons, French and Bugle Horns, Drums, Trumpets, Guitars, single and double Flageolets, Violins, Violas, Violincellos, etc.

Mr. Sheppard also advised that he could "tune piano fortes and repair instruments of every description." As a sideline he carried a "supply of fancy good and toys . . . drugs and medicines, perfumery, etc."

His first piano customer was Mr. Bela D. Coe, founder of the Buffalo and Albany stagecoach line, and one of Buffalo's leading businessmen. The Coes lived in a comfortable buff brick residence on Main Street near Eagle, and both Mrs. Coe and her niece, Miss Mary Wells, played the piano. Noah P. Sprague, a founder of the Erie County Savings Bank, was another customer of Mr. Sheppard's for a piano.

But Buffalonians were not buying pianos every day — sometimes the music business was very slow. It is recorded that Mr. Sheppard returned home one day and ruefully remarked to his wife, "I have sold but one fiddle string this whole week." His business improved, and, in 1844, he built



Pianoforte, as sold in James Sheppard's music store.

James D. Sheppard

a comfortable house at 175 Chippewa St. at Elmwood Ave., where he and his family lived for many years.

Mr. Sheppard encouraged and supported cultural activities in the city and, in 1831, arranged a series of concerts. The first "Grand Concert for Season 1831-32" was held on Christmas eve in the Court House. The program included band music, with Mr. Sheppard as band leader.

For more than 25 years, Mr. Sheppard was organist of St. Paul's Church, and today on the north wall of the nave is a memorial plaque to James D. Sheppard, first organist.

Over the years his business continued to grow. In 1854, he took a partner into the firm, Hugh Cottier, also an Englishman (later this became Denton, Cottier and Daniels Music Store). When Mr. Sheppard died at 83 leaving an estate of \$100,000, his will provided generously for his family, and he left the rest of the estate to charity.

In coming to Buffalo when he did, Mr. Sheppard brought to the village something which pioneers needed to help them face the rigors of life in the wilderness . . . he brought music.

As Bovee once said — "Music is the fourth great material want of our natures, first food, then raiment, then shelter . . . then music."

By 1840, the city had a population of 18,213—food was plentiful and farmers brought their produce into the city to sell at the Terrace Market.

THE TERRACE MARKET

A Buffalo housewife, in the early 1840's would don her shawl and bonnet and with a willow market-basket on her arm, sally forth to do her shopping at the Terrace Market, Buffalo's first shopping plaza. There, lined up along the curb were farmers' wagons with fresh fruits and vegetables, poultry coops, fish carts, live sheep, potato carts, cabbage carts, and wagon loads of Ebenezer onions.



Any weekday, one would see nattily dressed businessmen striding briskly across the square; farmers, just arrived in town with produce, watering their horses at the "twin pumps;" a bevy of housewives hovering around the market stalls; hucksters shouting their wares; wagons and carriages clattering over the rough paving stones in an endless parade.

Above this busy scene, "Old Glory" waved from a wooden Liberty Pole in the center of the square — a 125 foot mast, held upright by wooden braces at the base and surmounted by a trumpet weather vane and a four-foot gilded eagle.

The Terrace Market was a two-story brick building with a square wooden bell tower. The bell was rung to warn the villagers of fire. In this building also were located the offices of city government, the police and fire departments, and the Council Chambers.

The Watch House, headquarters for the City Watchmen, and a few "lock-up coops" were in one corner of the basement. At night, the watchmen, who doubled as fire fighters, would patrol the city streets in pairs, wearing leather fire hats with "City Watchman" painted on the forepiece, and carrying big canes and dark lanterns. In the daytime, their duties were to keep the peace and return lost children and strayed animals.

Housewives in the 1840's could select from a tempting array of fresh garden vegetables, fruits, and other produce, at prices which are unbelievably low today . . . eggs, 10¢ a dozen; turkey, 6¢ a pound, dressed. But don't forget that a laborer then earned 65¢ a day and skilled workmen such as carpenters and stone masons earned 75¢ to a dollar a day.

On the first floor of the Market building, approached by steep wooden steps, were the meat stalls. Meat was plentiful, and beef sold for 5¢ a pound, fish, 3¢. A fore-quarter of lamb cost 18¢, ham 7¢ a pound. Venison was often for sale as there were no restrictions on hunting deer.

Some produce was specially packaged, dehydrated, and frozen in the early days. Strings of dried fruits and vegetables, salted trout, and pickled calves liver, were sold for winter use. "Biled cider apple sass" was sold in quart jars and Quaker "sassigs" in canvas sacks. Blood pudding and pig's tripe were put up in special envelopes.

There were prepared pie mixes too — dried stewed pumpkin in little cakes for dissolving in hot milk to make "hasty" pumpkin pie. The little cakes sold for 6¢ a dozen. Pigs tails done up in greased brown paper for roasting in ashes sold for 2¢ apiece. Doughnuts "big enough for horsecollars" were a penny apiece.

Similar to frozen pies today were the square-tinned mince pies made by a woman in Lancaster. In the wintertime she sold them with instructions to freeze them outdoors, and when needed put them in a hot oven for 15 minutes. This sounds like instructions on a frozen pie carton today.

Buffalo's Terrace Market was a busy place. People have always been preoccupied with food and selling it is a profitable business because of the neverending demand. As Owen Meridith said —

He may live without love, what is passion but pining?
But where is the man that can live without dining?



By this time Buffalo had become a city of commerce, industry, and wealth. Business boomed, and there were many merchants and professional men who could afford large, elaborate homes. These were fine mansions with spacious rooms, high ceilings, kitchens in the basement, and surrounded by gardens and trees.

The home of Buffalo's first Mayor, Dr. Ebenezer Johnson, modestly called "The Cottage," was an impressive glass-domed building surrounded by acres of parks and gardens, located on Delaware Avenue. Social life flourished. People attended dances, balls, parties, receptions, and concerts. During these years societies were formed which later developed into the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library, and the Buffalo Museum of Science. Theaters were popular, and cultural clubs brought lecturers from all over the country. To most of these events, "ladies were invited, without whose cordial sympathy and blessing no masculine effort deserves to prosper."

Yes, in the short span of forty years, Buffalo had changed from a backwoods frontier village to a prosperous metropolis, center of industry, culture, and education. Its growth can be attributed to the fact that the

city was built upon the firm foundations laid by the hardy pioneer families.

“To be ignorant of what occurred before you were born is to remain always a child. For what is the worth of human life unless it is woven into the life of our ancestors by the records of History?” (Cicero, 46 BC)



Original artwork done by Mrs. Lindberg

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OLGA LINDBERG

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