PL & W was second area railroad

Line hauled coal, clay, pottery to country's industrial plants

By Lois Firestone

The road was the symbol of the country's spirit and hopes, beginning with the covered wagon paths and "turnpike" carved out of the primitive territory, the symbol of the country's spirit and hopes.

Nothing the settlers hoped to accomplish could be done without that symbol of motion. Nothing makes an inroad without a road.

The first thoroughfares were marked by the Indian and the buffalo. By far, the buffalo were more exact - the greatest marvel is that those great animals chose routes which, even today, can't be improved upon. Their keen instincts led them from one feeding ground to another, and from north to south, on high ground where roads were clear of summer snow.

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The original station depot for the Pittsburg, Lisbon & Western Railroad, a line based in this building along South Market Street in Lisbon, is still standing. The six other depots on the PL & W line have been destroyed. In recent years, the building has been used for storage by the Countrymark Mahoning Farm Bureau Cooperative. The Lisbon Historical Society would like to see the structure preserved. (Photo by Aleks Dolenko)

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The selection of photographs in a new book includes this image. 'The Dog Express' vintage 1910 made by Jean Barnard. The book is 'Animal Attractions' and the animal related photographs have been culled from some of the century's most renowned photographers. (AP photo courtesy Howard Greenberg NYC gallery)

were many families that lived in that house, especially during the war years when it was rented out.

"But one family stayed more than 25 years. So their children and my children had a lot of good times and memories of that old house and with Raymond, too."

Mr. Houlette subscribes to the newsletter issue. We might add that Brooks Bowman was inducted into the Salem Hall of Fame on June 9, 1994. His brother, George H. Bowman Jr., a prominent Salem attorney, is also in the Salem Hall of Fame.

To set the record straight, Mr. Houlette wrote us with some followup comments about our Yesteryears story on composer Brooks Bowman.

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DANCING LADY — This porcelain frog in the shape of a dog’s head. When its mouth is open, the eyes between $75 and $85.

is the name of the design of your furniture. Current prices for a nine-piece set made by Berkey & Gay would probably start around $2,000 and up.

Q. I inherited a porcelain coffee pot from my grandmother in Germany. She told me that it was used at a wedding in 1846. My coffee pot is white and trimmed in light orange. It is about 8 inches tall. On the bottom are the words “Villeroy & Boch.” I have no intention of selling it but would like to know when and where it was made and its value.

A. Your coffee pot was made by Villeroy & Boch in Mettlach, Germany in the mid-19th century. It would probably be worth about $125.

Q. My aunt gave me a cast-iron nutcracker that is over 100 years old. It is in the shape of a dog’s head. When its mouth is placed in the dog’s mouth and a lever is pulled, the shell is cracked. What can you tell me about my nutcracker and does it have any value?

A. They might be able to build a better mousetrap but 20th century technology hasn’t been able to design a better nutcracker. They might have some refinement at least to 1700s. Some of the more popular motifs were animals and soldiers. Most were made of cast iron or brass. The vintage of your nutcracker is the last 18th century. It would probably be worth about $65 to $85.

Letters with pictures are welcome and may be answered in the column. We cannot reply personally or return pictures. Address letters to Anne McCollam, PO Box 490, Notre Dame IN 46501.

This is an August 1923 photo showing former heavyweight boxing champion Jack Dempsey training. Dempsey later ran a New York restaurant in the 1970s. (AP photo courtesy Harry Harris)

Antiques or Junque

Search for fort ongoing

By the Associated Press

A DOZEN STRANGERS are tramping through JoAnne Fuller’s yard in Fort Edward, New York, digging deep holes and leaving piles of dirt nearby. Next door, two porridge-pot-like tin sentinels on Bruce Walker’s property were pushed down in a line of trenches resembling foot holes.

"It’s wonderful," says Mrs. Fuller. "It’s a joy," Walker says. Mrs. Fuller and Walker and a couple of 30 students, staff and volunteers are participating in a month-long archaeology field school to search for traces of old Fort Edward, one of North America’s largest military installations of the 18th century.

The remains of the fort are believed to lie under a three-block area of single-family homes on tidy streets that dead-end against the eastern bank of the upper Hudson, 40 miles north of Albany.

In the mid-1750s, the British built Fort Edward as a staging area and supply base for the French and their Indian allies to the north. Some 16,000 British and American colonial troops were billeted here in the late 1750s, war’s worst nightmare, Hardy.

"It’s the first important step toward the Revolution, because you’ve got all these colonials from different colonies who never really interacted before," Starbuck said. "They’re thrown together here, they’re forced to fight, thousands of them, against a common enemy, the French."

For the last four years, Starbuck and groups of amateur archaeologists have been excavating nearby Rogers Island. Named after the leader of Rogers Rangers, an American outfit of frontiersmen skilled in Indian-style warfare, the island has yielded a storehouse of artifacts that give scholars a rare glimpse into pre-Revolutionary military life.

This summer, Starbuck’s project has turned its attention to Fort Edward itself. The fort saw some use during the Revolutionary War, but was abandoned afterward and left to deteriorate. The village of Fort Edward grew up on the site, and 12 homes stand on what was once the interior of the seven-acre fortress.

In Fort Edward, history lies underfoot — literally. It’s under their houses, it’s under their yards, and they have never let people come in with shovels to destroy what they own," Starbuck said.

This is the first time anyone has been allowed to conduct an archaeological dig in the neighborhood, Starbuck said. The driving force behind the project on Rogers Island and now in Fort Edward is JoAnne and Richard Fuller, a couple of French and Indian War buffs who sold their modern ranch home so they could buy a 180-year-old house on the site of the old fort.

Over the years, she has collected nearly 200 copies of diaries and journals of men who fought in the war, many of whom spent some time at Fort Edward. Living where they lived and reading their words about 18th-century military life — boredom, bad food and bugs were common gripes — reveals that a soldier’s lot hasn’t changed much in 200-plus years, Mrs. Fuller said.

"You definitely get a feel for what they must have been going through at that time. It brings history alive," she said.

Most archaeological digs take place in jungles or deserts or other remote locales far from the eyes of the public. The Fort Edward project is smack-dab in the middle of a residential neighborhood. Residents and the occasional tourist drop by, with Mrs. Fuller happily acting as tour guide. It takes some getting used to, Starbuck said.
Sojourner Truth, avid abolitionist born to bondage

By Margaret Starbuck

Salem was important to Sojourner Truth, and Sojourner Truth was important to Salem.

She was the most notable and highly regarded African American woman in the 19th century, the only abolitionist that had been born into slavery in the North. She was tall and born to bondage in the 18th century, the only abolitionist American that had been born into slavery. Her devotion to the anti-slavery movement and the human rights of the African American, her fiery advocacy of equality for women and of temperance, were woven into the fabric of Salem in the 1830s.

Sojourner was born in approximately 1797 in the Hudson Valley of New York state. Her parents were slaves belonging to the wealthy Dutch Hardenbergh family whose ancestors had been given a land grant of two million acres (including the Catskill Mountains) by the Dutch monarch in the days when New York was a Dutch colony. Very early the Dutch had a lively trade in slaves from the Congo, the United States, and Africa to the Americas. Slavery in the North was different from slavery in the South, but no better.

Given the name Isabella, Sojourner was given the name of Isabella. She was the youngest of 12 or 13 children born to Elizabeth and James. James was given the nickname "Baumfree" which meant "like a tree" in Dutch. He was tall and straight and strong.

The slaves lived in the dark. They slept on the loose planks that covered the dirt floor, with only straw and a blanket for bedding. Of all her older brothers and sisters, Isabella remembered only the next two older — a sister and a brother. All the rest had been sold off. Her parents repeated stories of her siblings so that she knew each by name.

The Hardenbergh family did not offer Christian education to their slaves as some slave owners must have done. Her parents taught her a strict moral code of always telling the truth, never taking what belonged to the master, and obedience.

Elizabeth taught her children to say the Lord's Prayer in Dutch. She would take them outdoors at night, and pointing out the planets and stars, wherever they were. She told them that God was high above in the heavens. He was their help. They must call on Him when they were in trouble. In her simple way, Isabella believed that she would have to shout very loud for her voice to reach above the stars, so she sought out a place in the woods where she could be alone and cry out to God. When bad things did happen to her she believed it was because she hadn't had time to cry out to God beforehand.

Don't resist whites.

The children were taught they must not resist the white folks. They were told of a child who had resisted when the slave traders came. His head was dashed against a wall. Isabella vividly remembered one winter day when the gay jingle of sleigh bells were heard outside. Her brother, about five years old, hurried out to see the sleigh, just in time to see his older sister snatch up and put into an iron cage. The brother rushed back into the cellar, but his parents would not protect him. They urged him out, admonishing him to obey. Although she was quite young, Bell never forgot that scene.

When her father's sight became too dim, and his strong body had become crippled from injuries and arthritis, her parents were given a little cabin in the woods, but no means of sustaining themselves. They both perished of malnutrition and neglect.

When Isabella was about nine, there was an auction to settle an estate. No one bid on Isabella so she was thrown into an iron cage. Her new owner was more interested in purchasing the sheep than the slave girl. He and his wife spoke English, and Bell spoke only Dutch. She received many whippings because she did not understand what she was ordered to do.

She was about 12 or 13 when she was purchased by John Dumont, the kindest of her owners. She had never known anyone like him and she thought he must be God. His wife, however, did not like Isabella, and often treated her harshly, perhaps because her husband seemed to favor Bell.

Should bear children

In a few years Dumont decided it was time Bell should make additional contribution to his wealth by bearing children. He gave her to another slave in a slave-marriage arrangement after he had had what he considered "his due." While she belonged to Dumont she bore five children, all the time doing as much work as a man. Dumont boasted that she could keep up with the men in the field, then stay up most of the night doing a family washing.

Pennsylvania and New England states had emancipated slaves soon after the United States became a country — toward the end of the 1700s. The Dutch in New York resisted. By 1817 there was enough pressure that they were finally forced to accept the law, but it was very complicated. Only slaves over the age of 60 were freed on July 4 of that year. Others born before 1799 were not freed until they were 25 years of age and men until they were 30. In a benevolent mood, Dumont said because of her faithful work he would give Isabella her freedom a year earlier — July 4, 1826. That date was like a beacon light to Bell — her day of liberation. That spring she bore her fifth child. She also injured her hand. She valiantly got all her work done, but more slowly. When the longed-for day arrived, Dumont said that because she had slowed down so much, she would have to wait until the next year for freedom.

It was a terrible blow, but she felt she should not have counted on Dumont's promise. White owners were notorious for not keeping promises. She made up her mind she would not stay for another year. She worked harder than ever. She spun the 100 pounds of wool that were saving her — a tremendous task. She helped in the fields until all the harvesting was done. Then she felt she was ready to leave — but when? Going in the dark frightened her, and she knew she could not get very far in the dark. "With whom will I go, God?" she begged. The answer came, "Go before dawn." "What a good idea! Thank you, God."

Left before dawn

Before dawn she started out with a small bundle of possessions and her infant. There was no one on the road to see her.

To be continued
German dictator Adolf Hitler, right, with his adjutant Julius Schaub surveys damage to his chancellery in Berlin in April 1945. First published by the Berlin magazine Illustrated Telegraf, the picture is among the last photos showing Hitler alive near the end of World War II. (AP file photo)

Tying a rope around a tree, Hiroo Onoda, former Imperial Army lieutenant, instructs children at his nature camp in Fukushima, northern Japan on July 24. Onoda honed his outdoor skills during the 29 years he held out in a Philippine jungle before accepting Japan's surrender. (AP file photo)

World War II personalities

In this famous photo taken by Allan Jackson, infantrymen of the U.S. First Army, left, extend welcome hands to Russian troops on a broken bridge over the Elbe River at Torgau, Germany in April 1945. Jackson, a World War II correspondent for the International News Service shot himself to death Wednesday, July 25. He was 80. (AP file photo)

Iva Ikuko Toguri, known to thousands of Yanks in the Pacific arena of Yanks in the Pacific arena of World War II as Tokyo Rose, was a former UCLA graduate student. She poses in Tokyo in September 1945 following her capture by American forces. Toguri ultimately was sentenced to 10 years in prison for her propaganda efforts. (AP file photo)
to pay its bonded debt, the Pennsylvania sued the town, claiming it had no right to build the road. The court agreed, ruling that the special act of the Legislature to approve the project was unconstitutional, and the road passed into the hands of a receiver. Bondholders finally bought it in for the face value of the bonds. On November 14, 1902 the road was taken over by the Pittsburg, Lisbon & Western. At the same time the road consolidated with another system, the Shenango and Beaver Valley Railroad Co.

The Elkton trestle was a giant viaduct, built of wrought iron and constructed on a curve looming above the Elk Run Valley. The bridge, which cost $10,000 to build in 1888, reached 104 feet at the highest point.

The speed limit was five miles an hour, but with passengers aboard, Baumgartner slowed down still further. Before they started over the bridge, McClain checked made certain the rows were evenly divided with no top-heavy aisles.

Tales about the dangerous bridge have been told and retold, several compiled by Lois Switzer in her book about her family’s general store in Elkton, “Over the Counter and Under the Bridge.” Implausible, but strange enough to be true, like the story of a father, Mr. Spencer, walking the bridge with his four-year-old daughter, Ann. As they reached the highest point of the bridge, she said “Papa, you are holding my hand too tight.” The father loosened his grip on her hand and a moment later she had fallen over the bridge.

However, the child’s starched petticoats acted as a type of parachute and her father found her, unharmed, lying in a leaf-filled gully. Construction workers had miscalculated on one of the deep holes for the concrete foundations. Mrs. Switzer claims she met the girl, then grown in an Elkton store years later.

Another of Mrs. Switzer’s stories relates the frightening adventure of a stranger, a salesman filling in for the regular candy salesman who was vacationing. Instead of arriving at Signal in the afternoon it was near nightfall when he got there. Mr. Dickey told him he’d have to make the trip to Elkton on foot, and that the railroad tracks would be the shorter way.

Outfitting the salesman with a lantern, Mr. Dickey explained he would arrive at the railroad station after a three-mile trek and could walk the tracks from there. Further down, the Crawford family would be waiting to board him for the night, and the salesman could leave the lantern there for him to pick up later, Mr. Dickey said.

When he reached the Crawford house, the family asked him about his walk on the rails. “Did you walk the bridge?” he asked the man. “I didn’t see any bridge,” was the answer.

The next morning, Mr. Crawford took the salesman up the hill to see the bridge he had crossed by lantern light.

During the early war years, tons of coal were hauled over the PL & W to steel mills. After a bridge inspection showed the trestle was in poor condition the train cars continued, but traveled over the dangerous tracks at an extremely slow speed.

In the 1940s the structure was purchased by the Kulka Iron Co. of Alliance along with the abandoned four-mile section of the road. In May 1943 the bridge was dismantled by Wilmer Wolfe. Over 750 tons of iron were donated to the war effort from the bridge which had served the area well for 55 years.

The line shut down in 1942, but the original station, built in 1893, still stands in Lisbon along South Market Street. Since World War II, the building has been used by the Farm Bureau and then Landmark today the Mahoning County Landmark uses the building for storage, but what the firm will eventually do with it hasn’t been decided.

The Lisbon depot where the line was based is the only one of seven stations built for PL & W. Railroad clubs and the Arms Museum of the Mahoning Valley Historical Society have talked about possibly housing a railroad museum there. The Lisbon Historical Society members would like to see the building preserved but are hard-pressed to maintain their two museums.

This curving bridge built by the Pittsburg, Lisbon and Western Railroad at Elkton, was 104 feet high and nearly 1,000 feet long. The curve made the viaduct treacherous and trains slowed to about four miles an hour when crossing.