

**PROGRESS**

**THROUGH**

**FRIENDSHIP**

***Supplement***

**SARDINIA**

**1976**

# *FOREWORD*

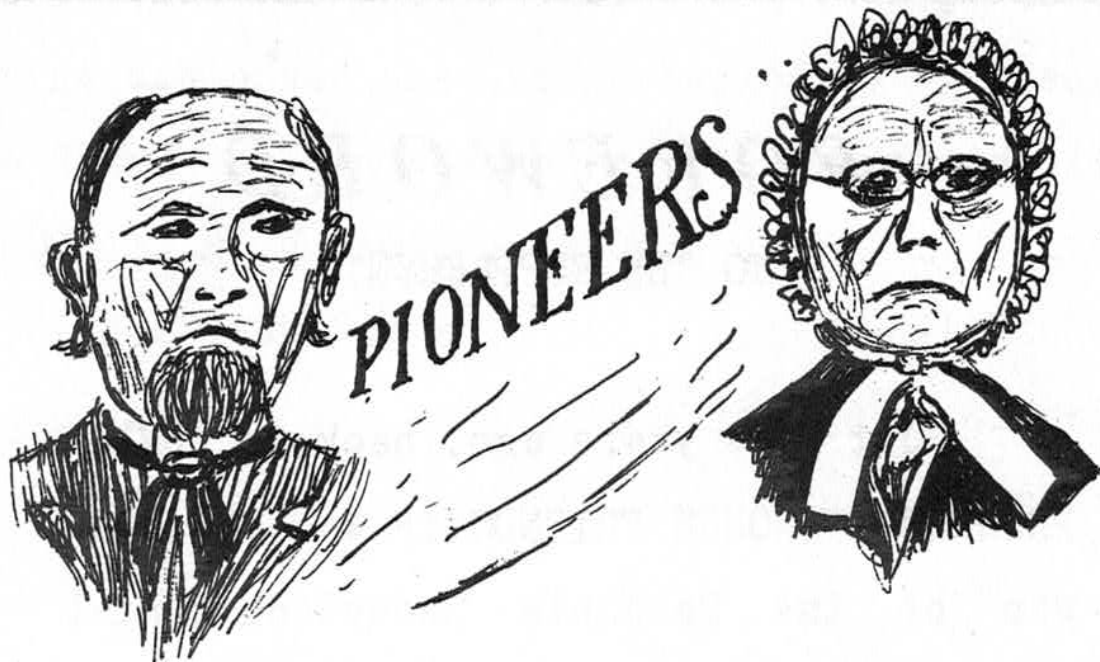
## TO THE SUPPLEMENT

Just five years ago, back in 1971, PROGRESS THROUGH FRIENDSHIP was the slogan of the Sardinia Sesquicentennial celebration. That was also the year when a history of the town was prepared.

Certain things that might well have been included in that history were omitted, either inadvertently or because the writer wasn't aware of them at the time. Also, changes within the town have taken place, that should be mentioned.

So it seems appropriate to publish this supplement, which is presented as a contribution to the National Bicentennial program in Sardinia.

Laurence Remington Rupert  
Town Historian



It is possible now to furnish considerable additional information about various pioneer families, including some not mentioned in the original history.

HANNAH BAARDT WILKES COLBY

Hannah Baardt was born in 1773, the daughter of a Dutch settler in the Mohawk Valley. She married John Wilkes in 1790 in Litchfield, Herkimer County, New York. It is reported that he was killed by Indians about 1812. After his death she married Deacon John Colby, and they came to Sardinia sometime before 1815. Deacon Colby was a man of importance in connection with the organization of the Baptist Society in Sardinia.

John and Hannah Wilkes were the parents of twelve children, of whom four had descendants living in Sar-

dinia until many years later. One of them, Catherine, was the wife of Horace Rider, and hence was an ancestor of all the James Hopkins descendants, a number of whom are still living in Sardinia. (See p. 6 of PROGRESS THROUGH FRIENDSHIP.) Hannah's youngest son, John, married in 1829, Abigail Colby. Her wedding dress was of bronze silk, and a piece of the material is on display in the Sardinia Historical Museum.

John and Abigail were great-great-grandparents of Milton Wagner of Arcade. We are indebted to Mr. and Mrs. Wagner for most of the knowledge we have of the Wilkes family. It was the result of painstaking research by Mr. Wagner's mother, the late Mrs. Florence Bolender Wagner.

Hannah Colby is buried in the Sardinia Cemetery and the lettering on the gravestone is still clearly legible.

### JOHN JOHNSON

In the well known History of the Original Town of Concord, by Erasmus Briggs, is an account of a Fourth of July party held at the George Richmond place in 1811. Among the guests listed were Mr. and Mrs. John Johnson from Arcade. Before the year was over, how-

ever, John Johnson had purchased 100 acres of land along the Cattaraugus from the Holland Land Company. Here the Johnsons established their home, and their eldest son Richard was born on March 11, 1812. He was the second child born to pioneer settlers in the Town of Sardinia. (The first was Ray Briggs, son of Mr. and Mrs. Giles Briggs, born in 1811. ) Richard Johnson married Eliza Curtis in 1838. At least three of their children, Volney, Ann, and Minerva, have descendants now living in Sardinia, or who have lived here so recently as to be well known.

Volney Johnson's daughter Ella was the mother of Allan Spencer, whose sons are Claude, Clifton, Stanley, and Earl. A number of their children and grandchildren also live in Sardinia. Volney's daughter Iva was the mother of Letha Woodard and LaVera Farrar.

Ann Johnson was twice married - first to David Goodemote, and second to Albert Ellis. Her son, Philip Goodemote, has a grandson, Philip Goodemote, who, with his family, lives on Route 39 . Her son, Eugene Ellis, was the father of Harry and Howard Ellis, both residents of the town, and the grandfather of

Lois (Mrs. Ronald) Kittleson

Minerva Johnson married Henry Witheril. One of her sons, Clair, operated one of the first gasoline stations and automobile repair shops in Sardinia. His son, Hector, a life long resident of the town, died in 1975. One of Clair Witheril's daughters, Winona DeGolier, who lives in Brocton, has helped greatly with this history of the Johnson family.

ELIHU and JOSEPH RICE

Additional information should be included about the Rices. Elihu Rice saw active service in the War of 1812, and was at one time in command of Fort Schlosser on the Niagara Frontier. His wife was Elizabeth Nott, sister of Ezra Nott.

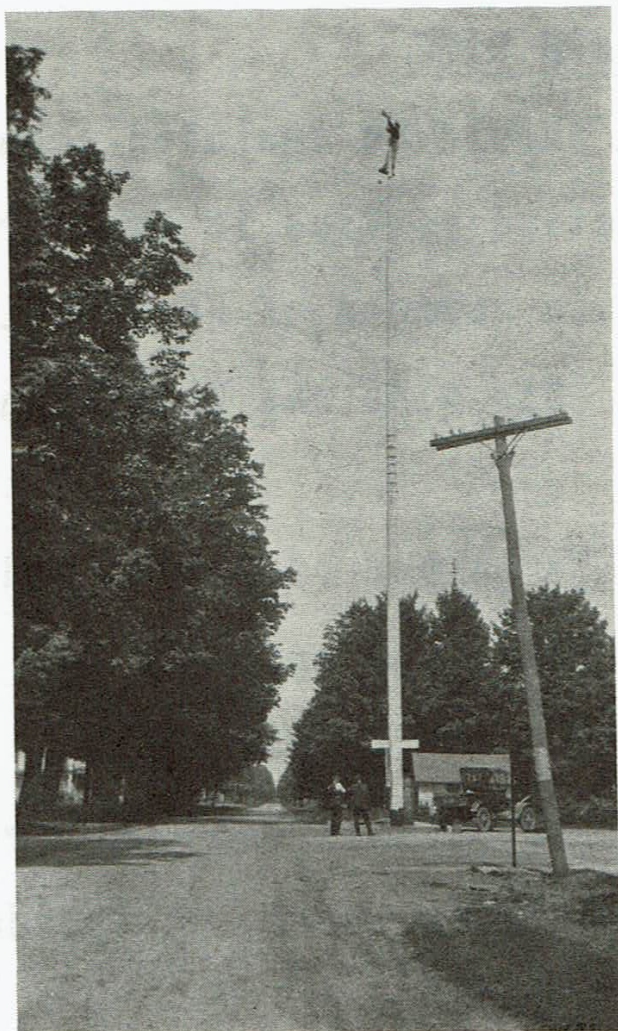
The Cherry Tavern, at the corner of Schutt and Olean Roads, built by Joseph Rice, and operated by members of his family until the 1870's, was an important station in the "Underground Railroad", an arrangement that helped runaway slaves escape to Canada before the Civil War.

HORACE RIDER and JAMES HOPKINS

There have been inquiries about the brick house that stands south of Sardinia, near the Cattaraugus.

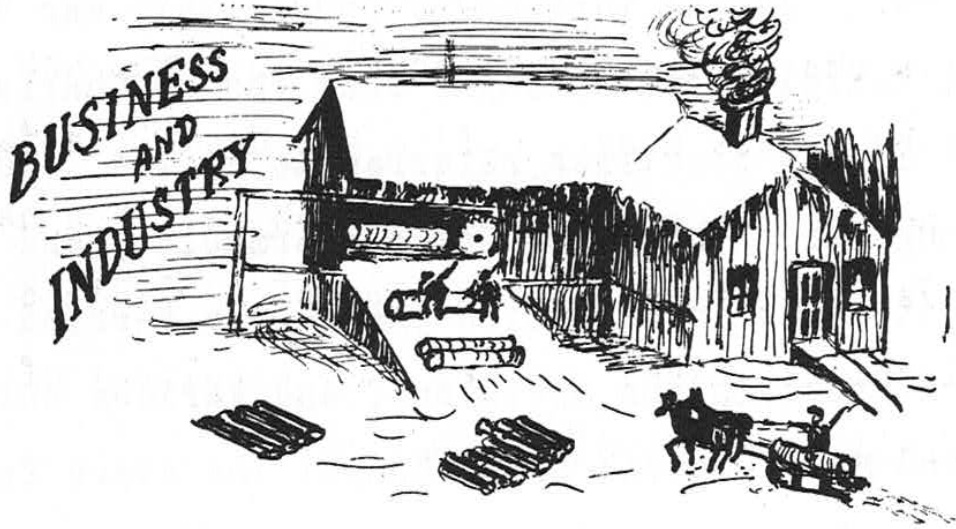
This is one of the oldest houses in town, and was built by Horace Rider. After his death the farm came into possession of his daughter Abigail and her husband James Hopkins, who was one of Sardinia's most prominent citizens, and was vice-president of the Springville and Sardinia Railroad.

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The Liberty Pole getting a new coat of paint, about 1922.

The weather vane on the Methodist church steeple can just be seen between the liberty pole and the telephone pole.



Of possible interest are three stores which once operated in Sardinia, but which were not mentioned in the former volume.

One was located at the "Upper Corners" and has, in relatively recent years, been remodeled into a home, where Mr. and Mrs. James Killian now live. It is reported to have been built by Dr. Bela Colegrove, who lived across the street. Over the years there were many proprietors, among the more recent of whom were the Hipkiss family, Mrs. Dan Hetzel, and Mrs. Florence Schaus. Mrs. Schaus was the last person to run a store there. She closed the store in 1949, moving to a new location on Route 16, between Chaffee and Protection.

The store that stood just west of the present Sardinia post office, fitting completely into the corner there, has an early history that I cannot seem to



discover. In the very early 1900's this was a rather small building containing a shop run by Charles Robley. It was sometimes referred to as the "drug store", although Mr. Robley was not a pharmacist, and no prescriptions could be filled there. He carried a line of non-prescription medicines, and various notions. Mr. and Mrs. Luzerne Smith bought the store from him, built on living quarters, and operated a general store there for some years. Incidentally, Mr. Smith was a nephew of Erasmus Briggs, the author of the famous HISTORY OF THE ORIGINAL TOWN OF CONCORD. Later proprietors of this store, each for a brief time, were Mrs. Mazie Benton and the Robert Arnold family. Then, under the management of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Humphrey, it was expanded to become a much larger store, attracting customers from a large area roundabouts. After their retirement it was run for a time as the Sardinia Shopping Center. The building finally succumbed to the ravages of a fire and a heavy snowstorm, and was torn down.

The house where Mr. and Mrs. Norman Heineman now live was also formerly a store. For many years it was a grocery store, owned and operated by Warren Andrews, who lived in the house next door. Before 1910 Mrs. Andrews was still living there, and

the yard was surrounded by a low white picket fence. By that time Milton and Robert Pitcher had a hardware business in the store. Milton Pitcher was the postmaster, and the post office was also in the building.



THE PITCHER & PITCHER HARDWARE STORE AND  
POST OFFICE - EARLY 1900'S



BENTON'S STORE-1922

Building at left  
is present post of-  
fice.



Within the past five years one organization of importance has come into existence in town - the Sardinia Historical Society, organized in 1973.

Its purposes include the study of the early history of Sardinia, preservation and possible exhibition of old records , manuscripts and articles connected with the early history of the town, and the marking of places of historic interest. Ever since the organization of the society the president has been Mrs. Marjorie DeGolier.

The major activity of the society has been the establishment of a historical museum in the upper story of the north wing of the Town Hall. In the day when the building was a church, this wing was the church shed, but it has now been finished off, with a beauti-

ful long room upstairs, which houses a fine collection of museum pieces. The museum was dedicated July 6, 1975.

The picture below shows the outside of the Historical Building as it looks today.



## A FEW INTERESTING OLD-TIMERS

In the early 1900's there were a few rather unusual persons, all completely different, who were well known to almost everyone in Sardinia. Of these, four have been selected for special mention here. Today only the older residents can remember any of these, but others might be interested in reading about them.

THOMAS B. CROCKER -- Mr. Crocker was descended from some of the earliest settlers in Sardinia. He was a veteran of the Civil War, and was commonly known as Col. T. B. Crocker, although the title Colonel was purely local and honorary in its application. He was a conspicuous man-about-town, well dressed, and with a slightly pompous air. He was for years the local editor of the Sardinia Censor. For many years before he retired to Florida, he was in charge of Memorial Day celebrations here.

GEORGE DAKE -- At one time George Dake was perhaps the wealthiest man in Sardinia village. He was, in a sense, a sort of one-man bank, making his fortune in real estate transactions, mortgages, and loans. He never married, but was twice engaged. Neither of his former fiancées ever married, and they are buried, one

on each side of him, in the Sardinia cemetery. He died in 1934, at the age of 87.

HERMAN GERWITZ -- Mr. Gerwitz was a plump little man with a white beard who lived in the former Springville and Sardinia Railroad depot, in the triangle where the gasoline station now stands. He was originally a carriage maker, but in his later years he did general repairing, and could repair almost anything from furniture to the old hand-pushed lawnmowers of that day.

KATE McDONALD -- She came to Sardinia as a young woman, and never told where she came from, nor anything about her early life. She never had a home of her own; yet in a sense she had many homes. There were a number of households in Sardinia where she took turns staying. She would appear at someone's door, unannounced and with her little bag, and would be welcomed in to stay as long as she pleased. She helped with housework and looking after children. When she got ready to leave she would walk out and go to another of the homes she visited. As the writer remembers her, she was a little old lady, quite near-sighted but very unwilling to wear glasses. After her death, in 1923,

friends chipped in and bought a cemetery marker which is on her grave in the Sardinia cemetery.

### REVOLUTIONARY WAR VETERANS

Since Sardinia was not settled until after the Revolutionary War, all the veterans of that war who ever lived in Sardinia came here many years after the war. We do not have a complete list of these men, but here are the names of a few. It is of interest that of those whose ages are known, all lived to be over 80.

Caleb Hamet (Dates of birth and death unknown.)

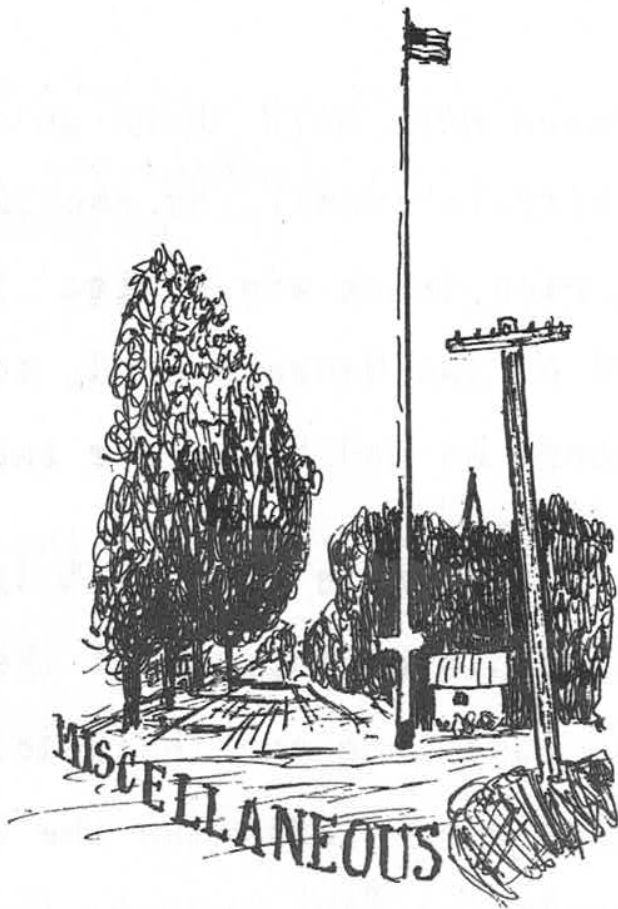
James Hopkins (1749-1831)

Reuben Nichols (1752-1840)

Elisha Pomeroy (1762-1849)

Elisha Randall (1762-1847)

David Shedd (1758-1841)



We now have two historical markers in the town. The first one, dedicated in connection with the Erie County Sesquicentennial celebration in 1971, is beside Route 16 at the main corner in Chaffee and commemorates the Springville and Sardinia Railroad. The second stands in front of the town hall, which was formerly a Baptist church, the first church built in the town.

At one time Sardinia had a race track. It was located on the west side of the Olean Road, south of the Genesee Road. The grandstand stood across the road from where the Ranch House has been located in recent



years. Harness races were held there until the mid-1890's, and also bicycle races. No record has been found of when the race track was built. The owner, Charles Orr, lived on the Genesee Road, adjacent to the race track, where he had barns for race horses.

There is an unfortunate oversight in connection with the map of Sardinia on page 36 of the 1971 history. The railroad locations are indicated, but without names. The line ~~+~~ indicates the Buffalo and Susquehanna Railroad; the line ~~o~~ the Springville and Sardinia Railroad; and the line ~~x~~ the Pennsylvania Railroad.

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In addition to the persons mentioned in the text as having contributed information for this volume, I am indebted to the following persons: Marjorie Rice and Gordon Stockin for information about the race track; Stanley Spencer and Letha Woodard for facts concerning the Johnson descendants; Florence Schaus who furnished information about the store at the "Upper Corners"; also others who helped in any way.

*Lawrence R. Rupert*