

# Tales Twice Told

by Lynne Belluscio

One of the more popular columns that ran in the *LeRoy Gazette* was "Tales Twice Told". So I started to comb the files for things that happened 200 years ago; 150 years ago; 100 years ago.

There wasn't much going on in the Ganson Settlement in 1810. It would be two more years before it would become Bellona and almost another year before it became LeRoy.

In 1810, Richard Stoddard died. He had surveyed the Triangle Tract and served as its first land agent. He and Ezra Platt had built a grist mill on the west side of the creek. He also built the first building on the west side of the creek, on the corner of Main Street and Mill Street. He erected the building on the corner of Main and Lake Street (where the Wiss is located). Stoddard was also elected the first sheriff of Genesee County.

The bounty on wolf pelts in 1810 was \$10. About 25 new pioneers moved into the area in 1810, including Chester Barrows, Willis Buell, Jacob Coe, William Harris, Seth Harris, the Kelseys, James McPherson, Stephen Olmsted (who taught at the Fort Hill School), Thomas Warner and Chester Waite. James Madison was president of the United States and the third census reported that the nation's population was 7,239,881.

Fifty years later, there were a lot of changes. James Buchanan was president and the U.S. Census listed the population at 31,443,321. The local newspaper, the *Gazette* was filled with news from Washington and the presidential campaign. In November Lincoln was elected and soon after South Carolina succeeded from the union. The first American kindergarten opened in Boston and the Pony Express began service from St. Joseph, Missouri to Sacramento. The first run took 10 days. A half ounce letter cost \$5.

In 1860 the game of croquet was introduced from England and the 7th inning stretch became



**In 1910, the conductor of the Italian Concert Band, left for New York City, supposedly to sign a contract with the Richardson Circus. He and the money he collected from band members, were never seen again.**

popular at baseball games. Here in LeRoy, the *Gazette* reported that work had begun on LeRoy's first gas works. Charles Ward from LeRoy was elected the president of the Genesee County Agricultural Society. The new Universalist Church was dedicated (the former Masonic Temple that was razed last year). There was a lot of talk about the Silver Lake sea serpent and LeRoy citizens were very concerned about the cows that were grazing in Trigon Park on the young trees and shrubs. (Although not mentioned, I'm sure they weren't too happy about what the cows left behind!) Dr. Barrett from LeRoy had performed surgery on James Farnham and restored his sight after 12 years. It was noted in the paper that Barrett had used chloroform in the operation. And Clark Daniels of LeRoy received a patent for a new process of tanning leather.

Fifty years later, in 1910, the census reported the national population had grown to 91,972,266 and 4% of the population had college degrees. William Howard Taft was president and the State of Washington adopted suffrage

for women. The Boy Scouts were founded on February 6, 1910. A publisher from Chicago, William D. Boyce, took the idea of the scouts from Sir Robert Baden-Powell in England. A month later the Campfire Girls were organized. Barney Olfield set a new land speed record of 133 mph at Daytona. Here in LeRoy, Peter Callan put a new bus into service. Frank O'Geen was killed by a Lehigh Valley train at the North Street crossing. Father Gambino of St. Anthony's Church and St. Joseph's Church was transferred to Buffalo in August.

In September LeRoy was swept by heavy rains. Several kids were injured while playing with dynamite caps. Plans for the Lathrop Chapel at Machpelah Cemetery were approved. Construction on the new high school was moving along and the last commencement was held at the old high school (behind LeRoy House). Cora Woodward donated

land behind the new school for a new athletic field. The remains in the Ingham Cemetery on the site of the new school (the old Ingham Campus) were exhumed and moved to Machpelah Cemetery.

Lake Street was rocked by the explosion of the Genesee Hotel, next to the railroad tracks. Paul Woodward, son of Orator and Cora Woodward, died at the age of 23. LeRoy citizens complained that the Village ordinance that prohibited bicycles on the sidewalks was not being upheld. The LeRoy jail on Bank Street was condemned. The Italian Concert Band had been told that their conductor had made plans for them to join a circus. He needed money to go to New York City to complete the contract and collected \$5 from each member. Unfortunately, they discovered that he headed to New York - - with their money, but had never made arrangements for the band to join the circus.

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