

Ink Wells and Stove Doors

by Lynne Belluscio

A few weeks ago I received an e-mail from George Henry about an iron stove door on ebay. I took a look and the door was marked P.A. Palmer, LeRoy, N.Y. Patented 1850. "Ever heard of this guy?" "Nope. I'll buy it and see what I can dig up about him." So I bought the door and a couple of days later it arrived. So who was P.A. Palmer and what was he doing in LeRoy?

I knew about the Bacon stove foundry on Bacon Street and have come across mention of other small foundries, but never Palmer. I searched through a number of files here and couldn't find anything about the stove but did discover that Peter Avery Palmer was the son of Rev. Reuben and Lucretia Palmer. He was born May 11, 1801 in Montville, Connecticut and died in Lansingburg, N.Y. on January 28, 1892.

He married Naomi Calkins on September 2, 1821 in New London, Connecticut. Their first child, Elizabeth was born in New London and then they moved to LeRoy. They had eight more children. Tragically, four of them died while the family lived here. Frances died in 1828 when he was three. Etzler died in 1842 when he was ten. Elizabeth, their first child died in 1844 at the age of 11 and Clinton died in 1845 at the age of seven. They are all buried in the

Myrtle Street Cemetery. When Peter Palmer first came to LeRoy he worked as a shoe maker. An ad in the August 31, 1826 *LeRoy Gazette* states: "Peter A. Palmer would inform his customers and the public at large that he still continues to carry on the shoe making business at his stand one door down East of A.S. Hosmer's Inn where he will accommodate either by working his own stock or the stock of those who may wish to employ him in that way." Later he went into a partnership with H. Coon

and the company advertised that "Their prices will be as low as can be afforded." I haven't been able to discover much about the stove business. I did find his patent #7672 for an elevated kitchen stove. According to the United States Patent Office "The nature of my invention consists in the arrangement of revertible flues in elevated ovens; secondly in the arrangement of a grate in the four boiler hole elevated oven stove so as to build the fire under the back boilers and nearer the oven for summer

use requiring less fire to heat the oven and two boilers than when the fire is made in the front part ..." etc. etc. I also discovered that he had filed for an improved three legged milking stool. I have looked through our 1850 *Gazettes* and haven't been able to find where he was located in LeRoy. He doesn't appear on the 1850 maps. In 1858 he moved to Troy where he continued in the stove business. The only evidence of his invention and his business in LeRoy is this stove plate.

Another "find" was discovered under one of the bushes in the garden behind LeRoy House. I found an old glass inkwell buried in the dirt. I dug it out and brought it back to the office and put it in the sink and discovered that it was marked "David's". It didn't take too much time on the internet to discover that it was a "turtle" or "igloo" inkwell. This type of inkwell was manufactured between 1865 and 1885 (the right dates for the LeRoy Academic Institute that was located where the parking lot is now). The mark David's is believed to be from the Thaddeus David's Company of New York City. The one I found had been buried for quite a long time and is badly discolored, and there is a small chip on the neck. If it were perfect it might be worth about \$100 and I did see one advertised for \$145.

