

Wonderful Diaries - A Glimpse Into The Past

by Lynne Belluscio

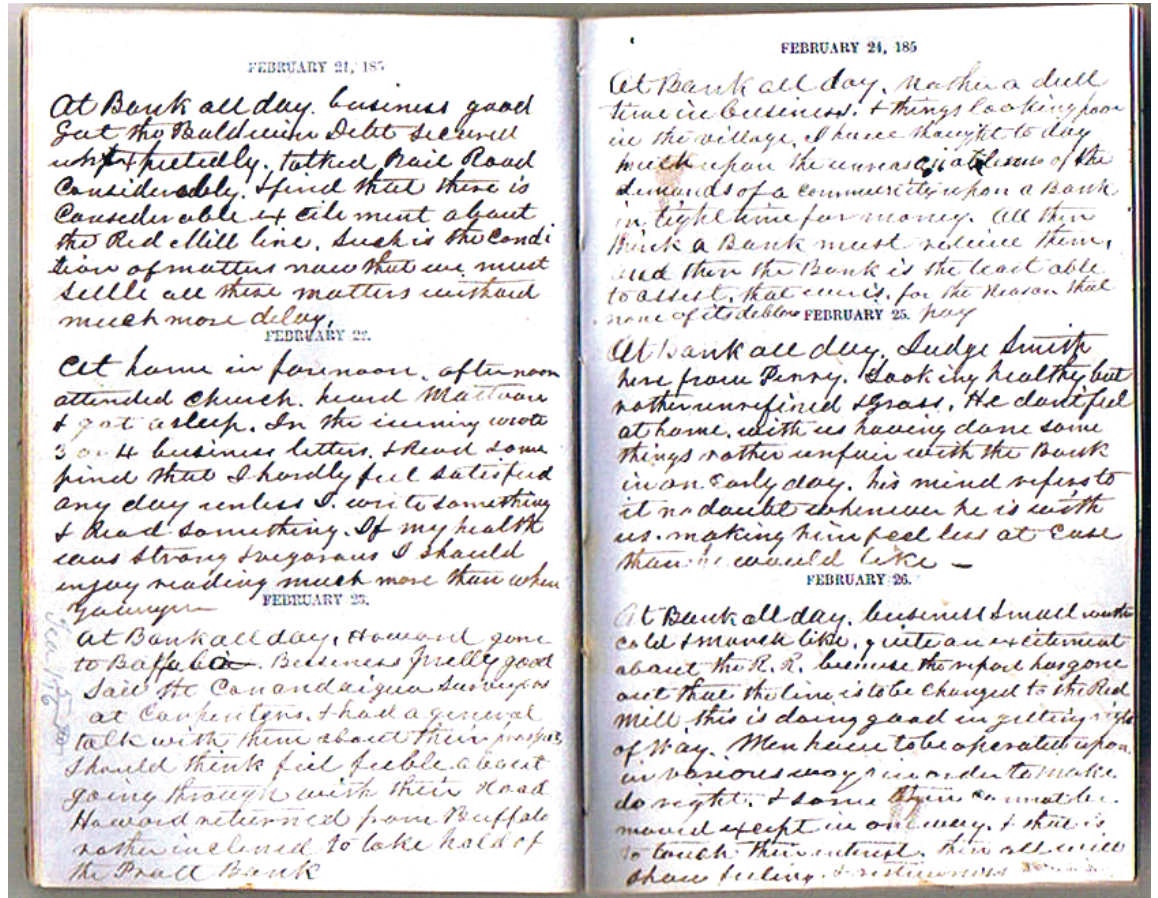
A couple of weeks ago, I received an e-mail about a collection of LeRoy diaries that were going to be sold at a house sale in Fairport. I tried calling and e-mailing the people organizing the sale, but couldn't find out anything about the diaries. I wasn't even sure if the diaries were from LeRoy. I wasn't able to go to the sale and figured I wouldn't ever know what I had missed. I was wrong.

A few days later I had another e-mail from someone who went to the sale. In fact he was the 32nd in line, and got there too late to buy the diaries. They sold for \$200. Bummer! Then the next day I received an e-mail from the woman who bought them. She was #22 at the sale – in fact she told me that she had to leave home at 3:30 in the morning to get to Fairport early enough to be in the first group into the house sale.

I had bought some things from her before, so she thought she'd contact me. She wanted to list the diaries on e-bay. She left me her phone number so I called her right away to find out more about the diaries. There were more than forty of them. Most of them were written by William Griswold, a farmer in LeRoy in the 1800s. One diary was written by Mrs. William Griswold in 1871. One account book was written by Moses Griswold who was a shoemaker in Killingworth, Connecticut in 1809.

Seven of the diaries were written by Miles P. Lampson, the founder of the first bank in LeRoy. Sue said she could bring the diaries to LeRoy so I could look at them. Last week Sue and her husband stopped by. And to make a long story short, they decided that it would make sense to sell the diaries to the Historical Society rather than post them on e-bay or sell them to a collector or another dealer.

I have started to thumb through the diaries. It takes quite a bit to read the handwriting. The



Miles P. Lampson's 1850 Diary February 21 - 26.

Lampson diaries are extremely interesting. Miles P. Lampson was born in New Haven, Vermont in 1794. He came to LeRoy in 1818 and taught school. After clerking in Thomas Tufts' store, he became a business partner with John Lent and in 1838, he organized the Genesee County Bank and served as the cashier until 1849.

In 1850, he succeeded John Lent as president and remained in that position until 1865 when the bank closed. He was a member of the Democratic Party, was instrumental in the development of the railroads, attended the Presbyterian Church (and usually didn't think too much of the sermons) and served as trustee of Ingham University in the 1850s. He was married to Eunice Graves and they had seven children. He died March 27, 1869. The diaries include 1849, 1850, 1852, 1865, 1866, and 1867.

The curious part of the story is that in 1977, the LeRoy Historical Society published excerpts from Miles Lampson's diaries 1847-1850. I discovered transcripts of 1850 and 1853

in our archives that had been done by Robert Saulsbury, but he doesn't mention where he found the originals or who owned them. The entries from 1850 match those of the diary that we just bought. But that doesn't explain the whereabouts of the other diaries. Apparently Robert Saulsbury enjoyed transcribing diaries, because when I pulled the files on William Griswold, I found transcripts of diaries from 1847 to 1854. The diaries that we just bought are from 1855 to 1898 but I have no clue as to the location of the earlier diaries.

William Griswold was born in LeRoy in 1819. His father, Julius came to LeRoy in 1813 from Killingworth, Connecticut and settled northwest of LeRoy. Julius married the widow Laura Thwing and they had four (maybe five) children. William was the oldest and he married Lucinda Bannister in 1844 and they had three children. When Lucinda died, William married Frances Hull of Bergen and they had four children. William's diary entries are short and mostly related to his farm activities: "Feb. 27, 1846

Done about the same as the rest of the week – merely nothing March 4, 1846 Fetched apples into the cellar that I had buried March 5, 1846 Got sap buckets down in the forenoon. Afternoon L. Hodges and wife were here visiting March 6, 1846 Drove hoops and scalded sap buckets" On March 9 he tapped the maple trees and for the next month he worked in the sugar bush.

I skipped to one of the diaries that I bought and looked for March 1855. According to the genealogy files, William's daughter, Thankful died on March 10, at the age of three. The diary shows that William was taking care of her for at least a week before she died. (I wonder if Lucinda was also sick and couldn't care for the little girl.) "March 10, Thankful died at ½ past 5." On Sunday March 11 "The little dear was buried." The following Friday he paid Goodrich for the coffin.

These diaries will provide a wonderful insight into the life and times of two men who lived and worked in LeRoy over 150 years ago.