

## A Stack of Memories: Fort Klock Newspaper Clippings

On this sunny morning, I started to search for a news article about the restoration of Fort Klock Blacksmiths' Shop. It was not an article from last week or even last year. It was 48 years old, having been published on May 7th 1964. For you younger people, it will take a few years to know just how fast 48 years can pass. Way down in the stack I finally found that for which I searched.

The article as I wrote it was a synopsis of the history of the old stone shop that had stood on the Fort Klock property for so many years, showing the importance of the blacksmith through the centuries and the efforts then being made to preserve the shop. As I searched for this article, I passed from one pile to another finding clipping after clipping which were mileposts of Fort Klock's story and how that piece of historic property was entwined in my own existence. There in newsprint were the triumphs of a young organization's many successes. How fortunate the much smaller number of heartbreaks did not find their way into the news. Some still at times escape the memory of some who lived them. Time will eradicate all and that is as it should be. Those old news clippings chronicled the 59 years of Fort Klock's story under two inter-related organizations. My own life has been entwined with them almost beyond remembrance.

The Tyron County Muzzleloaders, soon after organizing, formed a flint lock firing squad. There were then no re-enactments that area people could attend, where young and old alike could see actual period flintlock muskets being fired. The firing squad took part in parades, cemetery observances and even theater openings to the Davy Crockett movie. Davy Crockett did not have much to do with our area history but it did help to get better attendance for the theater owners who asked us to stand and perform outside their places of business. We also took part in a pageant in Schoharie and major re-enactments at Rome, NY.

A huge glacial boulder was taken from a Stone Arabia farm and transported to Fort William Henry at Lake George to create a permanent memorial to the Mohawk Valley men under William Johnson who helped build that fort in the French and Indian War days.

For ten years a Historical Pageant was staged at Fort Klock. The Civil War was commemorated when our Civil War squad presented a program at the Fonda Fair. The squad marched in numerous area parades and spread the word that the 115th NY Volunteers, which we reactivated, once marched from our area to preserve the Union and after 100 years were easily forgotten.

These clippings became like the Burma Shave signs of my youth, signposts of nearly 60 years. How many young people even know what a Burma Shave sign was? Ask your grandparents about that. Anyway, I've tried to make my point.

There are so many people's names in those old clippings; people who helped to carry Fort Klock into our own day and age. You all added something and along with those 21st Century members will help hand Fort Klock in a reasonable state of preservation to those who follow us. We can pass the torch and hope it will keep burning brightly into the future.

Skip Barshied

Fort Klock

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