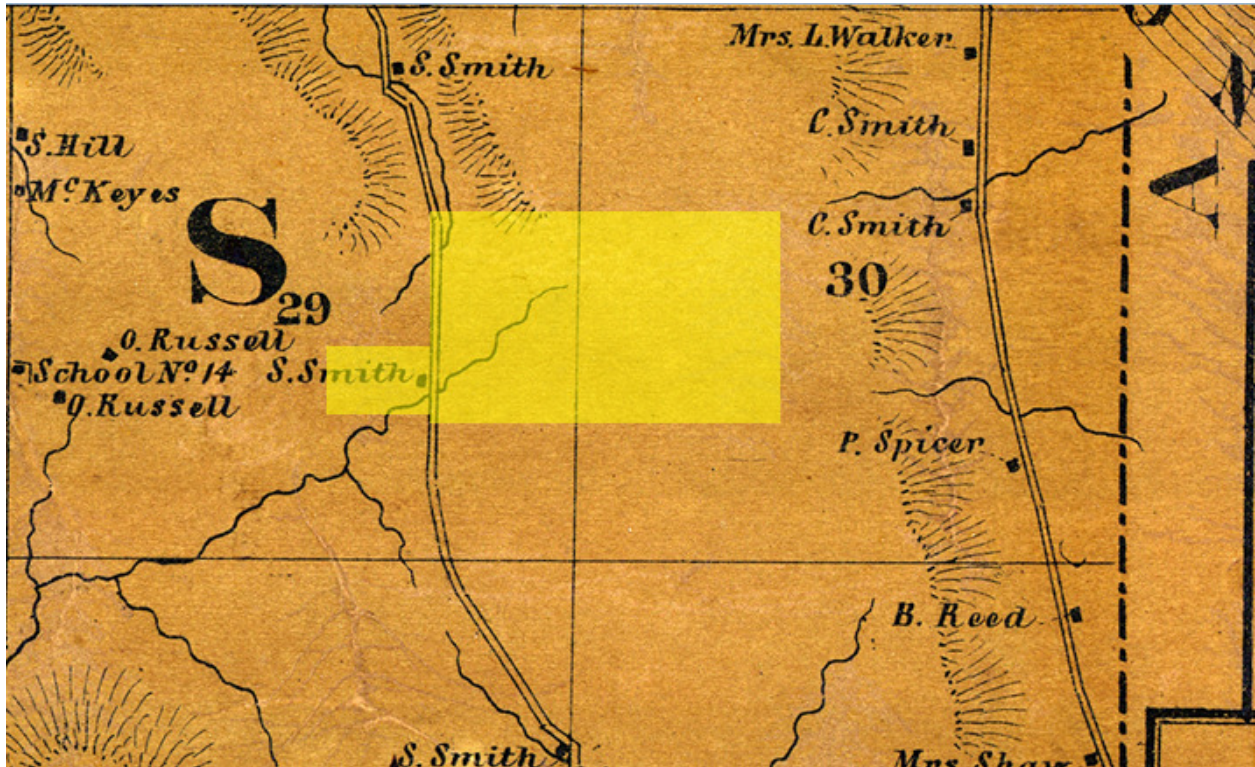


Lanty McGraw – An Early Settler in Kenyon Hollow

Lots 29 and 30 in the town of Fabius, Onondaga County, NY.

Revised: September 5, 2013



The above is a section of an 1860 map of the town of Fabius, Onondaga Co., NY. Shown are lots numbers 29 and 30. These lots are one square mile each or 640 acres. One mile equals 80 chains, which is a common unit used in land survey measurements. A grid of smaller squares of 10 chains by 10 chains and a 8 x 8 array of these squares were used to cover each lot. These were then used to sketch out the extent of Lanty McGraw's¹ property from the legal description in the deed book entries.

The yellow shaded area represents Lanty's property. This is approximate due to some looseness in the vertical (N-S) direction not only in the exact placement of the boundaries but also because the lots are not exactly square. In the east-west direction the lots are slightly longer than in the north south direction. The location of the east line of lot 29 was mentioned in the description of the property and that helps locate the property east and west. Also a north-south running road (Highland Park Road today) forms part of the western boundary of Lanty's property. Comparing our description with other features found in the 1860 map gives further confidence that this placement is correct. A configuration seen many times on these old properties was a homestead on one side of a road and the farm itself across the road. That is the pattern seen here with the small segment extending to the west side of the road containing the homestead. In 1860 it was labeled S. Smith (Seneca Smith), the person who had purchased the property from Lanty and his wife Catherine in 1858.

Legal Description of the property

Lanty and Catherine McGraw purchased land on lots 29 and 30 in the town of Fabius on February 26, 1856 (Bk 131, Pg 197). They sold it just two years later. This description was taken from the sale by "Lante" McGraw to Seneca Smith on March 13, 1858 found on pg 198 of Bk 131. Both transaction were recorded on April 2, 1858

The north-south location of the property within Lots 29 & 30 is a bit uncertain. The size of the uncertainty is limited to that variation that allows the homestead to remain within the portion of the property that extends west of the highway. The east-west location is referenced to the East line of lot 29 and is not uncertain.

"Beginning on the east line of land on said lot twenty nine, owned by Oliver Russell at a point five chains and fifty-one links south of said Russell's northeast corner.

Thence eastwardly nineteen chains and twenty links, to the east line of said lot twenty nine, thence eastwardly on said lot thirty. Thirty three chains and fifty five links to lands of Mrs Palmer.

Thence southwardly and parallel with the west line of said lot thirty, thirty chains and sixty eight links to a stake.

Thence westwardly along the north line of lands of Fowler and Horace D. Crow, thirty three chains and fifty five links to a hut at the northwest corner of the said land of Horace D Crow, on the west line of said lot thirty.

Thence west thirty six chains and seventy five links to the said land of Oliver Russell.

Thence northwardly nine chains and fifty links to the south line of land formerly owned by Thaddeus Negus.

Thence eastwardly along the south line of said Negus land seventeen chains and fifty links to the centre of a highway.

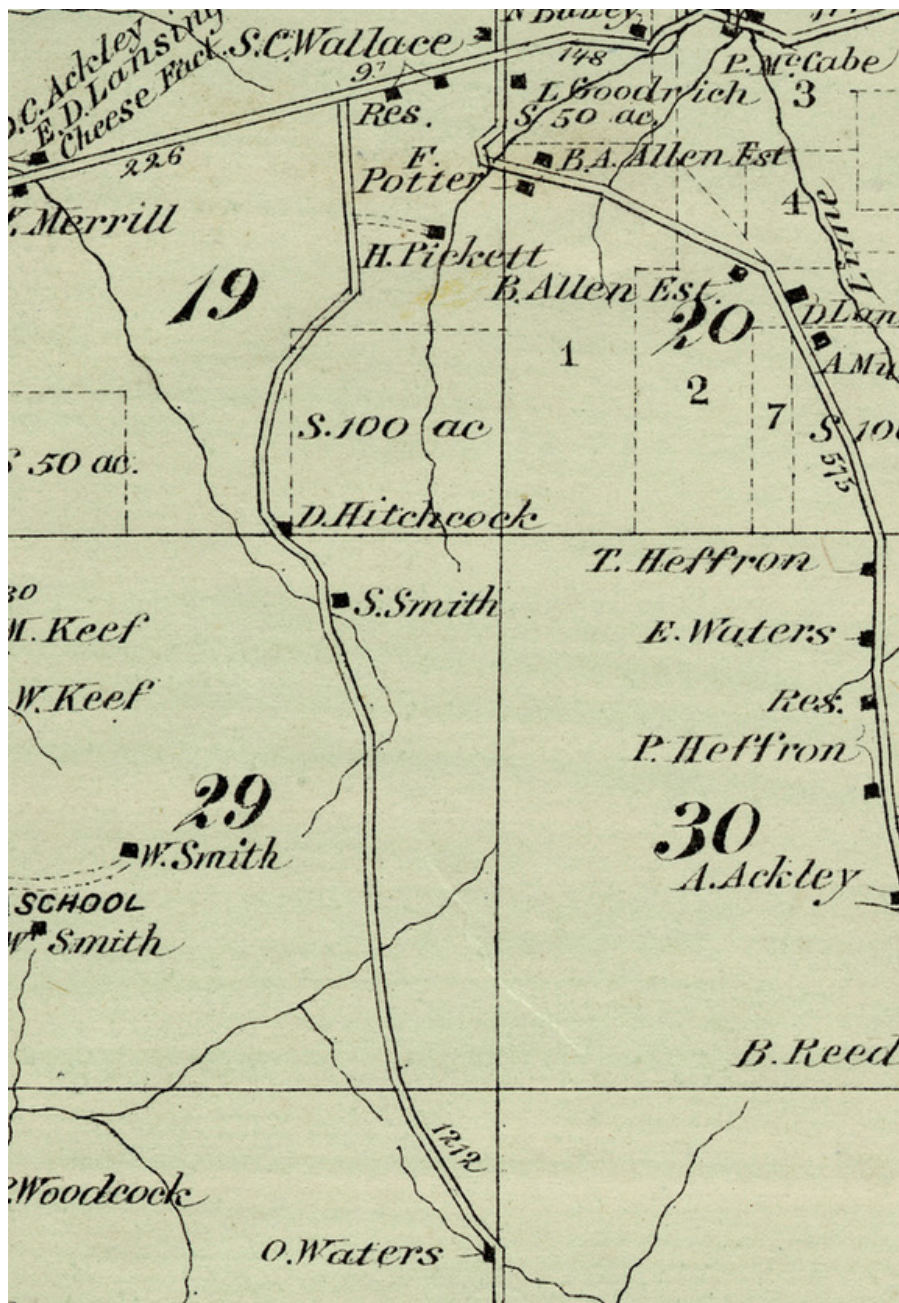
Thence northwardly along said centre twenty one chains to the place of beginning, containing one hundred and seventy eight acres of land. "

The last line indicates that part of the western boundary of Lanty's land was a north-south section of road that was straight for 21 chains or 1386 feet or about a quarter mile. This helps reduce the uncertainty in the placement of the property on the map.

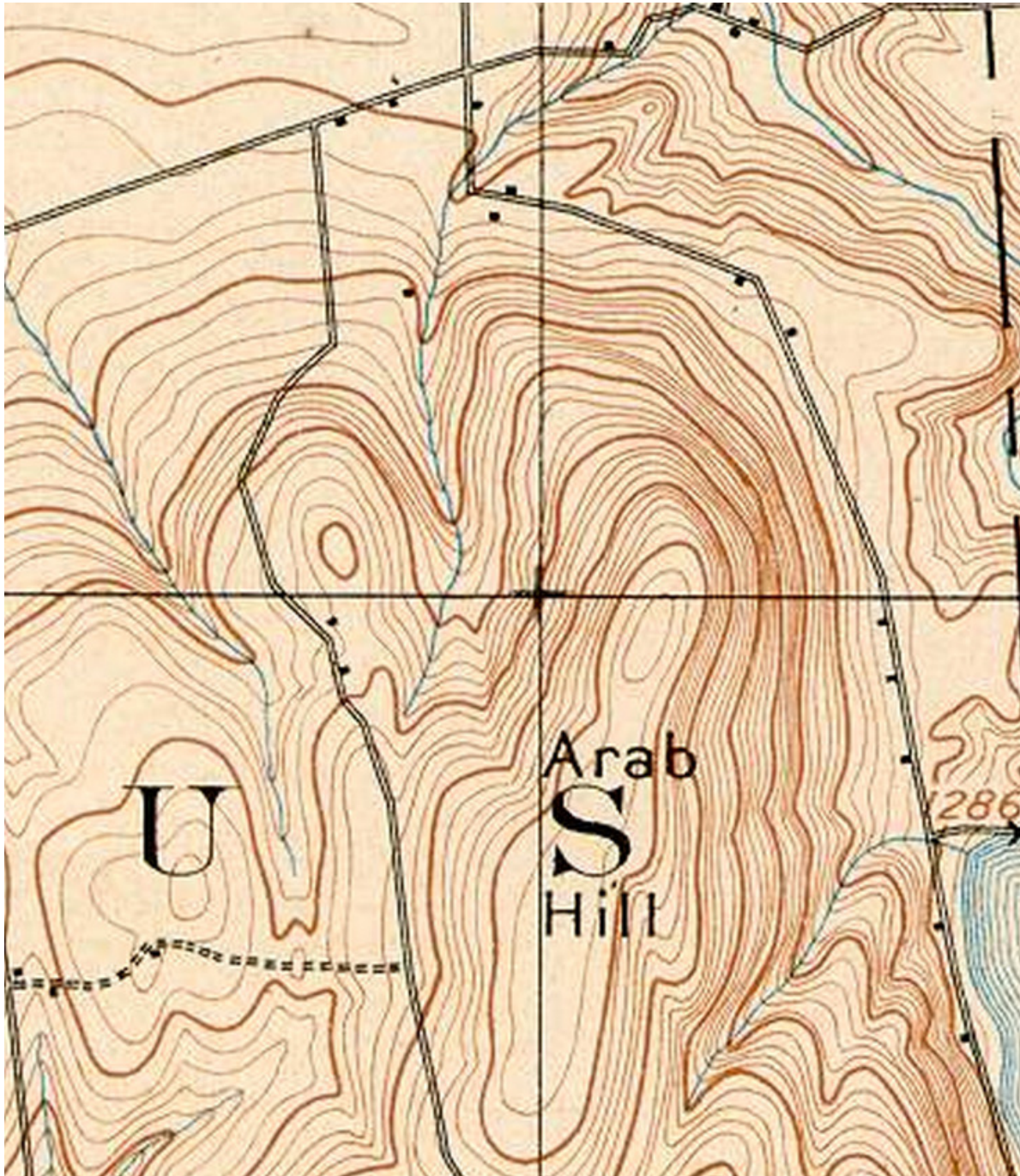
Lanty purchased the land for \$4272 with a mortgage that was due on April 1, 1857 by a payment of \$3660. The mortgage was held by the previous owners of the land, Albert Skeel and his wife Mary Ann, of Fabius. On March 13, 1858 Lanty sold the property for \$500 and the mortgage (either a new one or an extension on the original mortgage) was conveyed to Seneca Smith, the new owner. Smith was already a land owner in the area. Smith's original homestead, located about a ¼ mile north of Lanty's property, is today the Community House of Highland Forest Park.



This series of three maps and a satellite photo show the same region of the southeastern corner of the town of Fabius, in the years 1860, 1874, 1897 and 2013. In the 1930 the State of New York took over the land in this corner of the town. The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) carried out a reforestation program. During World War II the Syracuse China Co. carried out some secret testing with china land mines that could not be detected with traditional metal detectors.² Later it became Highland Forest Park where many of the McGraw Family Reunions were held through the 1950s and 1960s. The left hand n-s road in the 1860 map above is the main road into Highland Forest. The square marker labeled S. Smith was the location of Seneca Smith's house. It was used by the CCC camp during the 1930s and now serves as the Community House of Highland Forest. The 1950 McGraw reunions were held in that house.



This is the same area as shown on the previous page. This map is from a 1874 Onondaga County Atlas. Seneca Smith is still shown on the map. The Lanty McGraw homestead on the northwest corner of the intersection of the stream with Highland Park Road is no longer seen. At the bottom center is the Orson Waters farm. This was purchased from Seneca Smith in 1868 (Bk 109, Pg. 487 Onondaga Co, town of Fabius). Orson Waters' son Levi married into the McGraw family of Truxton by marrying Mary Isobelle McGraw. Lanty McGraw was the great uncle of Mary Isobelle McGraw. Orson was the great grandfather of the Waters boys in the picture on page 10.



This is view of the same section of the southeast corner of the town of Fabius. This is part of a 1897 United States Geological Survey (USGS) map. The grid lines crossing the map are not the Lot lines seen on the previous two maps, these are latitude and longitude markers. This shows a bit more of the north-south terrain. The left hand road is Highland Park Road and Seneca Smith's house (Community House) is the second square. Arab Hill is the most prominent structure here. The north boundary of Lanty's property is about even with an east-west line along the top of the letters "US." Most of his property was east of the road with an elevation heading up Arab Hill.



Again, this is the same area but this time shown in a satellite image. The main roads are the same with a few new off shoots. The area labeled “Highland Forest State Park Parking Lot” is the only large active area in the park today. The label is incorrect – the park is part of the Onondaga County Park System, not New York State. This used to be a smaller structure called the Sky Line Pavilion. Sometime after 2000 it was replaced with a much larger structure with self contained restrooms and a paved parking lot. The smaller structure to the south is the old Community House that is no longer open to the public. Lanty’s property started about a ¼ mile south of the ball field on the hill. Right at the location of the ball field there was a locked gate across the road at the time when we held our reunions there. This has been determined to be the northern boundary of Kenyon Hollow. In 2007 the gate was gone and road was open all the way through the park.



This is a close up of the old Community House which is the large green roofed structure in the center of the picture. Just to the upper left of the Community House is the old concrete shuffle board. Just north of the house were the many horseshoe pits for the picnickers. If the ladies weren't working inside the house they would be found in the shade near the shuffle board. On a small porch area at the back of the house was a pump that really worked and a large ice filled pail filled with soda. There was a continuous stream of kids going to the back and forth from the front of the house to the back of the house to play with the pump or to get another soda. There was also a constant refrain from the mothers to their children telling them to "Go through the house, don't go near the horseshoe pits."



This was how the old Community House appeared in August 2007.

Historical Marker erected in 2010
S. SMITH/JACOB
A.K.A. COMMUNITY HOUSE
GREEK REVIVAL HOUSE
CIRCA 1840'S
LAST REMAINING FARMHOUSE
IN HIGHLAND FOREST
WILLIAM G. POMEROY FOUNDATION

The following site has some very nice pictures of Highland Forest from the 1930s and 1940s.
[http://nyheritage.nnyln.org/cdm/search/searchterm/Highland%20Forest%20\(N.Y.\)/mode/exact](http://nyheritage.nnyln.org/cdm/search/searchterm/Highland%20Forest%20(N.Y.)/mode/exact)

An article by Dick Case in the May 22, 2011 Post Standard describes the work of Al LaFrance who has discovered the remains of 23 farmsteads in the nearby area once called Kenyon Hollow.³



This is the back of the Community House in 2007. The pump used to be between the two pillars in the covered porch area. The right rear corner of the house was the kitchen. In 2007 the old stove was still there but didn't look like it had been used in years. The kitchen itself appeared to be used for storing other equipment. This structure was once the homestead of Seneca Smith. Additions were probably made by subsequent owners, especially the CCCs. The stone steps in front look like their work.



These are pictures from the McGraw Family Reunion in the summer of 1959. The top photo shows brothers Ed McGraw (left) and Fran McGraw (right) relaxing on the Highland Forest Park sign after a hard day of picnicking.

The bottom picture shows the beginning stage of the ice cream line forming. Jane McGraw Dwyer and her husband were in charge. They always used a large tree stump for the operation. In the middle of the line, wearing shorts, are Bob and Mike Waters.





And finally, here is the old shuffle board court. This is where the old folks played during the reunions. There was plenty of shade here. When they tired out, which usually didn't take very long, then the kids got their turn to play. We just had fun firing the disks up and down the court as the older generation tried in vain to explain the rules to us. We were just going for distance and speed and didn't care about points or keeping score. Our way was more fun.

End Notes

- ¹ Lanty McGraw was the brother of Edmond McGraw:
Finding Michael McGrath of Moyaliff, Co Tipperary, Ireland
<http://mcgrathsearch.com/files/The%20Story%201-15-08.pdf>
The McGrath Family From Moyaliff Parish, County Tipperary
<http://mcgrathsearch.com/files/Bold%20Hypothesis%201-19-08.pdf>
- ² This link to the Syracuse China article also contains historical information on the remains of the old homesteads found in Highland Forest.
http://blog.syracuse.com/opinion/2011/05/syracuse_china_didnt_serve_tea.html
- ³ Ibid