

**TIME TO RECONSIDER A MARKER FOR DRID WATERS GRAVE
SITE
3/04/97**

If you mention Nat Foster most locals know who he was and what he was famous for. The name Pete Waters would not evoke the same response. It's a fair bet that Water's nickname, "Drid," wouldn't either.

Drid was the Native American that Nat Foster shot and killed at the outlet of First Lake on the Fulton Chain.

Nat Foster's life has been chronicled on several occasions. He typified everyone's concept of the early pioneer. Born in 1766, he lived until 1840 - a mean feat in those times. It in itself is testimony that he excelled in his trade as a hunter and trapper.

Born in Hinsdale, NH, Foster acquired an early hatred of Native Americans that persisted throughout his life. The stage was set when, as a lad of 14, marauding Indians harassed the homestead. His father was off with Washington's army and the family was fending for itself. Seizing the opportunity, the Indians had plenty of sport with the family before leaving them unharmed.

He acquired a reputation as an "Indian hater," crossing paths with several over the years pursuing his life as a woodsman. He never admitted actually killing any, but the popular perception was that he had.

In 1832, Foster, along with his wife and son David, moved into the old Herreshoff Manor at Fulton Chain (Thendara). He had leased the tract for hunting and trapping.

Drid, his wife and children lived a short distance away and made his living in the same manner as Foster. They were St. Regis Indians from Quebec and beyond that little else is known about the Waters family. Drid was purported to be in his late 20s. A belligerent and audacious person, he and Foster were soon at odds.

The animosity escalated to where the two men were issuing death threats to each other. Foster traveled to Brantingham to seek a peace warrant from a magistrate who refused to grant it. His advice to Foster was to leave the area.

Foster refused to do so and taking matters into his own hands, shot and killed Drid on September 17, 1833. He was acquitted of murder in a celebrated trial in Herkimer County Court.

Mrs. Waters and her children returned to Quebec to live with her brother. Sadly, little more is known of the family. She returned with nothing more than a piece of the blanket Drid wore with the bullet hole from Foster's rifle.

Waters was reportedly buried in an unmarked grave below the dam in Old Forge. Years ago a movement was started to place a marker near the spot commemorating the incident. I support a move to reconsider the proposal. It would be appropriate in not only honoring the dead, but in perpetuating an important local historical event. What do you think?

As an aside, I have a request from author William (Jay) O'Hern of Camden. He is doing a biography of A.L. Byron-Curtiss, who wrote *The Life and Adventure Nat Foster*. He would appreciate any information or artifacts anyone out there may have on Byron-Curtiss, who lived in the Forestport area. O'Hern may be reached at P.O. Box 435, Camden, NY 13316.

We should all do what we can to keep the legend alive.