

FAMILY IS DRAWN INEXORABLY BY HORSES AND CONVICTIONS

09/12/00

Have you ever heard the expression, “He would screw up a free lunch?” Well I have not only heard it, but all too often find it refers to me. I rationalize and think to myself it’s not just old age, but that I just have too many irons in the fire and too much on my mind.

A short while ago I did a column on the Allen family homestead in Phoenix, NY in which I stated four generations had lived there. As hard as it is for me to believe, I was mistaken. It did not take my baby sister long to straighten me out. There has been in fact seven generations that have resided there.

All of this information was gleefully dispensed this past Sunday on a visit with her husband, Dick Pearson at their home in Boylston. They live five or six miles above Lacona and Sandy Creek on the brink of Tug Hill Plateau overlooking Lake Ontario.

It was a beautiful day and we decided to go for a drive and lunch. As we drove through Sandy Creek my brother-in-law, Dick, pointed out a set of tracks etched in the blacktop roadway of Route 11. He had observed them being made the past Friday by the iron wheels of a horse drawn wagon. The occupants appeared to be Amish.

We followed the tracks to Pulaski, speculating on where they were bound and the problems they must face in the fast paced world of today. Dick described the scene as he had witnessed it.

They had a beautiful team of workhorses pulling a beautifully varnished hand-crafted frame structure built on a hay wagon frame. It was obviously living quarters modeled on the order of modern day motor homes. An enclosed buggy typical of those in use today by Amish was towed behind along with its prime mover, a spirited trotting horse.

Leaving the tracks in Pulaski we made our way to Rainbow Shores Hotel on Lake Ontario via Port Ontario for lunch. After a pleasant lunch on a deck overlooking the lake we retraced our steps back to Pulaski. Their curiosity and intrigue overtook us once more.

We all had questions and opinions relating to the travelers. Who were they? How far could they travel in a day? How and where did they spend their nights? How did they tend to the horses? Foremost in our minds, what was the reason for what was obviously a very long trip under their conditions.

Our quest ended on the outskirts of Mexico. The wagon and horses were parked in a field next to a farm supply store. There appeared to be no one about so we adjourned to a nearby stand for an ice cream cone. When we returned we noticed some children and adults about the wagon. I became presumptuous enough to stop and directly ask many of the questions that had been plaguing us.

They were a most gracious and attractive young family of born again Christians. The parents were Scott and Janice Rohlin and their three children were Hanna, John and Peter. Scott described himself as a self-proclaimed missionary and has given up his farm and vocation to work in the service of the Lord.

They came from Madrid, NY, from upper St. Lawrence County and were being guided by the Lord as to their ultimate destination. Scott speculated that it was likely to be Arkansas. He mentioned the possibility of spending this winter with the Inuit, native people of Upper Canada. If that were to occur they would board their animals and store the equipment for the winter.

People along the way had been very friendly and helpful. One might say in much the same way that Scott is offering help to others. He seemed optimistic about the future and undaunted that the government and media view matters much differently in the past. Marriage, family, truth, personal responsibility, character, ethics, freedom and religion do not enjoy the same connotations they once did, based on the edicts and portrayals of them by both groups. I hope that I have it right, I sense that he is willing to sacrifice much of his life to restore what should be rightful meaning to those things many people believe are being denigrated in the world today.

In any event I personally admire him for having the courage of his convictions and wish him the best of luck and God's blessing in his mission. If you should encounter them on your way, give them a smile and a hand.

P.S. They average 20 miles a day depending on the heat, humidity and terrain.