February 2018  Bakers Bridge Historical Association
Sherry Volk, Editor  Bakersbridge.org
Mondays, 7:30 p.m., Meetinghouse

February 19—Scotty MacCrea

Treasurer’s Report
Sherman Clarke
Checking account  $ 578.97
Savings account  $ 4366.72
Calendar cost  $ 580.75
Calendar sales  $ 880.55
Net  $ 299.80

Many thanks to Gallery 2 and Canacadea Country Store for helping to sell these for us.

Meetinghouse Notes
The new furnace is operating well.
Cleanup from removal of the debris in the attic is complete. Thank you to our volunteers.

Bill Greene kindly waived the speaker fee for his January talk.

2018 Programs
February 19—Scotty MacCrea—History of his family
March 18—Jim Ninos—Hazel Humphreys
April 16—TBD
May—Annual field trip

Current membership report—Mary-Lou Cartledge 90/96, as follows; 55 paid, 1 in nursing home, 34 life memberships, 6 unpaid.
Andover, NY, historian, Bill Greene, recounted and debunked several false stories about Nathaniel Dike, one of the earliest settlers in what today is Allegany County. Mr. Greene has done extensive work on the genealogy and history of the families who moved to the area after the Revolutionary War.

Nathaniel Dike (sometimes spelled Dyke) was born in 1747 in Killingly, Connecticut. He died in 1813 and is buried in Elm Valley. One of the most likely false stories about him is that he attended Yale University as a young man. Yale has records of a graduate (1812) named Nathaniel Dike, but neither the names of the parents, nor the chronology of that man's attendance match that of the Nathaniel Dike who eventually settled in this area. If he did ever attend Yale, he did not graduate, as the university keeps records only of its graduates.

Another myth about Nathaniel Dike is that he was a captain during the Revolutionary War and eventually became aide-de-camp to Gen. George Washington. Military records show that Nathaniel Dike signed up as a private, and served for seven days during one military campaign. His brother, who enlisted with him, was a sergeant. Also, Nathaniel Dike does not appear to have been on Gen. Washington's staff at any time.

Yet another wild story is that Nathaniel Dike came to western New York to fight Indians and that he eventually fell in love with a native maiden, named Esther. The truth is that Nathaniel married a white woman, Esther Burrell, long before migrating to this area. Of their children, Esther Dike (Travis) was born in 1768. She died at age 29 while the family was moving westward, and is buried in Athens, Bradford County, Pennsylvania. The other children's names were Isaac (born 1770), Hanna (1773), James (1776), Phebe (1776), and Nathaniel Jr. After the War, the family walked across New York State from Connecticut, first to Bradford County, Pennsylvania, then to Canisteo, Purdy Creek, and eventually settled in Elm Valley, where Nathaniel built a mill, a tannery, and ran a store. He hand-carved and gave away, free-of-charge, many head stones that still can be found in local cemeteries today.

Summary by Steve Jakobi

Left; Nathaniel Dike’s grave marker in Elm Valley
Right; Victorian postcard
Undated wintry photo of the hamlet, Elm Valley, from Allegany County Historical Society archives. Interested persons may find a history of the settlement by our January speaker at the following URL, or may type “Elm Valley, Allegany County, NY,” in your browser window.


George, the Milkman

by Sherry Volk

Some years ago, my brother, Dennis Butts, and I were reminiscing about milk delivery in Alfred as we were growing up. We remembered just one milkman, George, known to us only by his first name. He would allow us children to hop into his saffron-colored Elmhurst Dairy truck with the “No Riders” sign in the front window, and we’d accompany him on his route for a block or two. We saw the transition from glass quart bottles with “pog” type cardboard lids to crimped-on heavy aluminum foil lids, still on glass bottles, delivered to homes around the Village. The empty bottles went back to the dairy for re-use.

George would climb the thirty-two stone steps to our house on High Street every other day with a crate of milk and load those heavy glass quart bottles right into the curved-top

(Continued on next page)
refrigerator inside the back (kitchen) door. Some people didn’t get quite the service we did (you can im-
agine that, with six kids in the family, the quantity of milk was huge), but would receive their quart or two, or
even a pint, in an insulated Elmhurst Dairy milk box perched on the porch. On occasion, milk left outside
on a very cold day, would freeze. It was really cool (we didn’t use the word) to see what happened when
the expanding, freezing, milk pushed up the lid on a frozen white “stalk” a couple of inches tall. At the
time, homogenization, which no one even thinks about any more, was not commonly practiced at the
dairy, so the cream separated as the milk stood, forming a slightly yellower layer above the skim milk, so if
one didn’t carefully trap that creamy stalk as the milk thawed, everyone in the household drank skim milk.
Our mom used to “slurp up” the very top of that luscious cream layer from our quarts with a turkey baster,
collecting it until there was enough to make a lovely batch of real whipped cream to garnish gingerbread,
which was one of her specialties.

Alfred had at least two dairies at different times. My dad said that the one I remember on Church Street,
where the Doctors’ Office is now located, was called Terwilligers. I remember dairyman, Deighton Burdick,
who eventually sold many acres of his farm land to the State of New York, including that on which Lake
Lodge is situated. Farming of any sort has always been a hardscrabble business on Allegany County’s rocky
hills, so Deighton’s farm, and many more, have been turned over to other uses or simply let go to return to
forests.

A few years ago, my niece, Susie Butts Sanborn got me in touch with George, whose last name, Flaitz, I
finally learned. I wrote him a letter telling him of and thanking him for the en-
joyment he gave to children so long ago.